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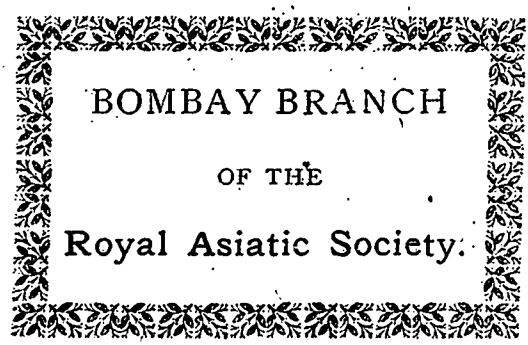

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ZELUCO.

VARIOUS VIEWS

OF

HUMAN NATURE,

TAKEN

From LIFE and MANNERS,
Foreign and Domeſtic.

——— Cur tamen hos tu
Evaſiſſe putes, quod diri conſcia facti
Mens habet attonitos, et ſurdo verbere cædit,
Occultum quatiente animo tortore flagellum?
Pœna autem vehemens, ac multo ſævior illis,
Quas et Cæditius gravis invenit aut Rhadamanthus,
Nocte dieque ſuum geſtare in pectore teſtem. JUV.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

The SECOND EDITION, Corrected.

LONDON.
Printed for A. STRAHAN; and T. CADELL, in the Strand.
M DCC LXXXIX.

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ZELUCO.

CHAP. I.

Strong Indications of a vicious Diſpoſition.

RELIGION teaches, that Vice leads to endleſs miſery in a future ſtate; and Experience proves, that in ſpite of the gayeſt and moſt proſperous appearances, inward miſery accompanies her; for, even in this life, her ways are ways of wretchedneſs, and all her paths are woe.

This obſervation has been ſo often made, that it muſt be known to all, and its truth is ſeldom formally denied by any; yet the conduct of men would ſometimes lead us to ſuſpect, either that they had never heard it, or that they think it falſe. To recal a

truth of ſuch importance to the recollection of mankind, and to illuſtrate it by example, may therefore be of uſe.

Tracing the windings of Vice, however, and delineating the diſguſting features of Villany, are unpleaſant taſks; and ſome people cannot bear to contemplate ſuch a picture. It is fair, therefore, to warn Readers of this turn of mind, not to peruſe the ſtory of Zeluco.

This perſon, ſprung from a noble family in Sicily, was a native of Palermo, where he paſſed the years of early childhood, without being diſtinguiſhed by any thing very remarkable in his diſpoſition, unleſs it was a tendency to inſolence, and an inclination to domineer over boys of inferior rank and circumſtances. The bad tendency of this, however, was ſo ſtrongly remonſtrated againſt by his father, and others who ſuperintended his education, that it was in a great degree checked, and in a fair way of being entirely overcome.

In the tenth year of his age he loſt his father, and was left under the guidance of a mother,

a mother, whoſe darling he had ever been, and who had often blamed her huſband for too great ſeverity to a ſon, whom, in her fond opinion, nature had endowed with every good quality.

A ſhort time after the death of his father, Zeluco began to betray ſtrong ſymptoms of that violent and overbearing diſpoſition to which he had always had a propenſity, though he had hitherto been obliged to reſtrain it. Had that gentleman lived a few years longer, the violence of Zeluco's temper would, it is probable, have been weakened, or entirely annihilated, by the continued influence of this habit of reſtraint, and the reſt of his life might have exhibited a very different character; for he ſhewed ſufficient command of himſelf as long as his father lived: but very ſoon after his death, he indulged, without control, every humour and caprice; and his miſtaken mother applauding the bluſterings of petulance and pride as indications of ſpirit, his temper became more and more ungovernable, and at length ſeemed as inflammable

as gunpowder, burſting into flaſhes of rage at the ſlighteſt touch of provocation.

It may be proper to mention one inſtance of this violence of temper, from which the reader will be enabled to form a juſter notion than his mother did, of what kind of ſpirit it was an indication.

He had a favourite ſparrow, ſo tame that it picked crumbs from his hand, and hopped familiarly on the table. One day it did not perform certain tricks which he had taught it, to his ſatisfaction. This put the boy into a paſſion: the bird being frightened, attempted to fly off the table. He ſuddenly ſeized it with his hand, and while it ſtruggled to get free, with a curſe he ſqueezed the little animal to death. His tutor, who was preſent, was ſo ſhocked at this inſtance of abſurd and brutal rage, that he puniſhed him as he deſerved, ſaying, "I hope this will cure "you of giving vent to ſuch odious guſts "of paſſion. If it does not, remember "what I tell you, Sir; they will render "you hateful to others, wretched to your-

"ſelf,

" ſelf, and may bring you one day to open " ſhame and endleſs remorſe." Zeluco complained to his mother; and ſhe diſmiſſed the tutor, declaring, that ſhe would not have her ſon's *vivacity* repreſſed by the rigid maxims of a narrow-minded pedant.

CHAP. II.

See how the world its veterans rewards!
A youth of frolicks—an old age of cards.
POPE.

BEING now freed from that authority which had hitherto ſtimulated him to occaſional exertions, Zeluco renounced all application to letters. This was partly owing to the love of diſſipation and amuſement natural to boys, but principally to the influence of a maxim very generally adopted by ſervants, and by them and other profound obſervers inſtilled into the minds of the young heirs of great fortunes, whoſe faculties it too often benumbs, like the touch of the torpedo, and renders them incapable through life of every praiſe-worthy exertion. The maxim is this—That learning, although it is ſometimes of ſervice to thoſe who are intended for certain profeſſions, or are in anyway

to

to gain a livelihood by it, is entirely uſeleſs to men whoſe fortunes are already made. —It is hardly to be conceived how many young minds have been checked in the progreſs of improvement by the ſecret operation of this malignant doctrine.

The neglect of letters was compenſated, in his mother's opinion, by his aſſiduous application to dancing, fencing, and other accompliſhments of the ſame claſs. Indeed, ſhe imagined he beſtowed ſuperfluous pains even on theſe, being perſuaded that nature had done ſo much for her ſon, that there was no need of the ornaments of art.

Being captivated with the uniform of ſome Neapolitan officers, Zeluco, at an early period of his life, announced a decided taſte for the profeſſion of arms. This heroic reſolution was highly approved of by all thoſe to whom he communicated it; which, indeed, was generally the caſe whatever he communicated, becauſe he aſſociated only with thoſe who were ready to approve of all he did or propoſed; for it

was

was another miſerable trait in this young man's character, to prefer the company of obſequious dependants, who on no occaſion withhold their aſſent, to that of men of a liberal ſpirit or of equal rank with himſelf; a feature which infallibly puts an end to improvement, and renders a man at length as diſagreeable to ſociety as ſociety is to him.—The tender affection of his mother was not greatly alarmed at the martial reſolution of her ſon, becauſe in the Neapolitan dominions the profeſſion of a ſoldier having no connection with fighting, this indulgent parent knew that her ſon's military ardour would ſubject him to no other danger than is attendant on reviews: to this ſhe ſubmitted, being aware that glory could not be obtained for nothing.

The pacific ſituation of the Neapolitan army, however, was not Zeluco's reaſon for preferring it; for he was naturally of a daring ſpirit. He, like many other idle young men, was attracted to the profeſſion of arms by a reliſh for the dreſs of an officer, and by the vanity of command over a few

few ſoldiers. At this time he thought no deeper on the ſubject. An application was therefore made by this indulgent mother for a commiſſion for her ſon; between which period and the time of its being granted, Zeluco counted the moments with the moſt fretful impatience; for although he had already ordered his regimentals, and often indulged himſelf in the pleaſure of ſtrutting in them before a mirror, yet he experienced the agonies of Tantalus till he could appear with them abroad. As the exigencies of the ſervice did not require the immediate preſence of Zeluco, he was permitted to remain at Palermo, and was introduced by his mother into a ſelect circle of her own acquaintance, which, ſhe informed him, conſiſted of *the very beſt company* of Palermo, where he would acquire the moſt uſeful of all knowledge—the knowledge of the world—and this too in the moſt agreeable and moſt effectual manner.

This ſociety was principally compoſed of a ſet of ladies of quality—maidens, wives, and

and widows—reſpectable undoubtedly on account of their ſex and age; and a few gentlemen, who bore a wonderful reſemblance in character to the ladies. Whatever buſineſs or avocation the members of this ſociety had, beſides thoſe of cards and ſleep, it muſt be confeſſed that ſuch avocations occupied but a moderate ſhare of their time, as all of them ſpent ſix or ſeven hours of the four-and-twenty in the former, and none of them allowed leſs than nine to the latter.

Zeluco's bloom, vivacity, and aptitude in learning the different games, procured him many flattering marks of attention from the female members. Theſe for ſome time pleaſed the youth himſelf, while his mother was highly gratified with the congratulations poured out on all ſides on the promiſing talents and charming appearance of her ſon; ſhe reflected with pleaſure alſo on the vaſt advantage which he enjoyed in being, at ſuch an early period of his life, removed from the contagion of frivolous company, and introduced into ſo poliſhed a circle.

What

What degree of improvement a ſteady and perſevering cultivation of this ſociety might have produced in Zeluco, was not fairly tried; for the flattery and blandiſhments of the old ladies ſoon became inſipid, and he ſtrayed in ſearch of pleaſure to thoſe haunts where ſhe appears with leſs decorum and more zeſt; ſoon after he joined his regiment at Naples, where he paſſed moſt of his time with a few young officers, who, with an equal paſſion for pleaſure, had not equal means of indulging it, and were therefore too apt to flatter his vanity and bear his humours.—The love of pleaſure ſeemed to increaſe upon him by indulgence, and was greatly cheriſhed by the ill-judged prodigality of his mother, whoſe fondneſs could not reſiſt his unrelenting importunity for money. The means with which this furniſhed him of indulging all his humours, in a country where rank claims an almoſt deſpotic ſway over the lower orders of mankind, joined to his keeping company only with dependants, cheriſhed and invigorated the ſeeds

of

of caprice, ſelfiſhneſs, pride, and injuſtice, which had been early ſown in the breaſt of Zeluco, and perhaps generated thoſe which did not originally exiſt. With no purſuit but pleaſure, and with ſuperfluous means of attaining it, he enjoyed very little, being the conſtant ſlave of humour and caprice; and, beſides, he looked forward with ſuch fretful impatience to the period when the law allowed him the uncontrolled command of his fortune, as was ſufficient of itſelf to embitter all his preſent enjoyments.

The original ſource of his wretchedneſs, and what had augmented, or perhaps generated, this miſerable impatience of temper, was the indulgence of his humours, and his being too liberally ſupplied in the means of gratification; but he himſelf imputed all his miſery to the ſcanty allowance granted by his tutors, and to his not being of age.

Previous to this period he returned to Palermo; and although he did not attend his mother's aſſemblies with all the punctuality that ſhe wiſhed, yet he could not

always reſiſt the importunity of a mother who was ready to make every ſacrifice for his gratification, and who exacted nothing in return but that he ſhould give her the pleaſure of ſeeing him admired in public, and condeſcend to beſtow a little of his company on her in private.

The happy moment he had ſo anxiouſly ſighed for arrived; and his guardians devolved into his own hands the intire conduct of his fortune. But while he remained in Sicily, on account of certain arrangements for which his preſence was thought indiſpenſably neceſſary, an incident occurred which detained him longer than he intended.

CHAP. III.

Virtue ſhe finds too painful an endeavour;
Content to dwell in decencies for ever.

POPE.

ONE of the moſt important perſonages of the ſociety into which Zeluco had been introduced, was the Counteſs Brunella, a lady who took every opportunity of inſinuating that ſhe had been in her youth greatly diſtinguiſhed for her beauty. Nothing, however, remained to juſtify her pretenſions, except this ſingle conſideration, that as ſhe had no fortune, and poſſeſſed no amiable quality, it was impoſſible to account for the marriage which raiſed her both to rank and fortune, but by ſuppoſing that, at the time it took place, ſhe was handſome. Her charms, however, whatever they had once been, were now entirely fled: but ſhe ſtill retained all the vanity, inſolence, and caprice, which ever attended

attended the bloom of beauty, with the addition of that peeviſhneſs and ill-humour which often accompany its decay. Her inſolence, however, was only diſplayed to the unprotected, and her ill-humour to her ſervants; for, to her ſuperiors ſhe was always obſequious, and to her equals ſhe diſplayed an everlaſting ſimper of approbation. This woman's benevolence was regulated by decorum; her friendſhip by conveniency; and all her affections by etiquette. Her heart had no concern in any of theſe matters.

She was chaſte, without being virtuous; becauſe in *her* it proceeded from conſtitution, not principle. Guarded by the breaſtplate of frigidity, which, like the Ægis of Minerva, repels the ſhafts of love, ſhe walked through life erect, and ſteady to the dictates of decorum and ſelf-intereſt, without a ſlip or falſe ſtep.

Inexorable to all helpleſs females who, from the frailty of nature, or the perfidy of man, were obſerved to totter, or even to ſtoop, in their progreſs, ſhe inſiſted

that they ſhould be for ever excluded from the ſociety of the upright: and if any perſon ſhewed a diſpoſition to palliate their errors, this vulture of chaſtity quitted, for a moment, the frail bird on whom ſhe had pounced, and turned her envenomed beak againſt thoſe who were for ſhewing the ſmalleſt degree of mercy; and being freed by nature from any propenſity to one particular frailty, ſhe indulged, without bounds, in the gratification of envy, hatred, ſlander, haughtineſs, and other vices of the ſame claſs, for which, from her childhood, ſhe had diſcovered a decided taſte.

This lady had a niece who lived with her. The young lady had little or no fortune in her own poſſeſſion, and as little in expectation from her aunt, who was too vain and oſtentatious to ſave any of her income, ample as it was. But the Counteſs flattered herſelf that ſhe ſhould procure her niece ſuch a marriage as would inſtantly ſupply all deficiencies, and raiſe her to wealth and grandeur. She made ſeveral unſucceſsful attempts for that pur-

poſe; the failure proceeded more from diſlike of the aunt, than from the want of attractions in the young lady.

A little after Zeluco came of age, the aunt fixed her eyes on him as a commodious match for her niece.—She was not unacquainted with his irregularities, but as ſhe conſidered rank and fortune as the great eſſentials in a huſband, theſe being ſecured, ſhe thought the reſt of ſmall importance. On former occaſions ſhe had proved, that ſhe looked upon age and infirmity as no obſtacles to the honour of being a huſband to her niece, and by the pains ſhe now took to draw in Zeluco to a marriage, ſhe made it clear that ſhe conſidered profligacy as an objection equally frivolous.

She began by paying uncommon attention to the mother of Zeluco: as the Countеſs Brunella was her ſuperior by nuptial rank, this attention greatly flattered the vanity of that weak woman.—She had for ſome time obſerved that Zeluco ſeemed to pay more particular regard

to her niece than to any other young lady at Palermo; and ſhe carefully inſtructed her in the arts of cheriſhing a moderate degree of liking into a violent paſſion. But this young lady, with leſs prudence, had much more ſenſibility than her aunt. The genteel figure and alluring manners of Zeluco ſeduced her into all the unſuſpecting confidence of love; but he, amidſt affected paſſion, preſerved all the circumſpection of determined perfidy.

Whilſt the aunt, therefore, was artfully planning what ſhe conſidered as an advantageous match for her niece, the unwary young woman granted, without marriage, what her aunt in ſimilar circumſtances had carefully preſerved; not from any value ſhe put upon the thing, but merely becauſe ſhe knew that by that means alone ſhe could ſecure the huſband who then paid his court to her.

Zeluco ſoon became tired of his conqueſt, and diſguſted with the tears of the unhappy girl. He neglected her with an unfeeling indifference more unpardonable than

than the crime he had committed. This being obſerved by the aunt, ſhe queſtioned her niece, who candidly confeſſed what her ſituation would in a ſhort time have revealed.

The Counteſs expoſtulated with Zeluco, attempting to obtain by threats, what integrity and a ſenſe of honour ought to have inclined him to perform. He treated her threats with deriſion, and with all the coolneſs of a veteran in iniquity he told her, that if *ſhe* choſe to keep her niece's ſecret, *he* ſhould; in which caſe, by the induſtry of her aunt, ſhe might ſtill be provided with a huſband: "in the mean time," added he ſarcaſtically, "it is to be hoped that you will make your own niece an exception from your favourite maxim, that all who have made a ſingle falſe ſtep ſhould be for ever excluded from reſpectable ſo-

The young lady retired to a relation in the country, and the adventure might have remained unknown to the public, had not the aunt, in the madneſs of her reſentment, prompted a Neapolitan officer, who de-

pended on her intereſt for his promotion, to call Zeluco to an account for his conduct on this occaſion. Zeluco, who was conſtitutionally intrepid, had for ſome time wiſhed for an opportunity of fighting a duel, the eclat of which was wanting to his reputation. He went out at the firſt hint with the Neapolitan, and, being an admirable ſwordſman, wounded and diſarmed him; and thus became an object of greater admiration in the eyes of many ladies than ever, both on account of this duel, and the occaſion of it.

The rage, diſappointment, and wounded pride of the aunt, when ſhe knew the event of the duel, rendered her exceedingly miſerable; but as in her proſperity ſhe had no feeling for the unfortunate, her own misfortunes excited no compaſſion. Some of her moſt intimate acquaintance, who paſſed for her friends, involving the niece in their hatred of the aunt, betrayed a malicious ſatisfaction at the fate of the unhappy young woman. And what was equally unjuſt, the public indignation

indignation at the baſe conduct of Zeluco was not ſo great as it ought to have been, merely becauſe the perſon he had ruined was the niece of this odious dowager.

This woman might have gone through life with as few enemies as friends, had ſhe remained paſſively ſelfiſh; but ſhe was making continual profeſſions of friendſhip; ſhe affected to be the deareſt friend of all her acquaintance, and to take a moſt extraordinary ſhare of intereſt in all their concerns. Each of them in their turns diſcovered that her profeſſions were falſe—from her acquaintance they became her enemies, and beheld her misfortunes with joy, which otherwiſe they would have regarded only with indifference.

CHAP. IV.

The Gratitude of a Son to an indulgent Mother.

A SHORT time after this adventure, Zeluco paſſed over to Italy, and in the different ſtates of that luxurious country he ſpent two years, in every voluptuous and expenſive gratification that his own imagination, or that of the profligate company he kept, could ſuggeſt. His mother had parted from him with reluctance; her fond partiality remained ſtrong as ever, in ſpite of all the proofs of a vicious diſpoſition he had diſplayed: ſhe viewed his character in a manner preciſely the reverſe of that in which Deſdemona contemplated Othello's; ſhe ſaw Zeluco's *mind in his viſage*; and as this was fair and regular, ſhe fondly believed it to be a faithful index of the other; imputing all that part of his conduct

conduct which ſhe could not juſtify, to the warmth of youth, which time and reflection would ſoon correct. She extracted a promiſe from him, before they parted, that he ſhould write to her regularly twice every month till his return. And as ſhe had obſerved on many occaſions that he was by no means exact in fulfilling his engagements, ſhe took this promiſe with ſome ſolemnity, and made him renew it oftener than once, adding, that if he neglected, ſhe ſhould certainly imagine that ſomething very terrible had happened: ſhe therefore entreated him very earneſtly, by a punctual correſpondence, to ſave her from ſuch a painful idea.

The manner in which Zeluco fulfilled this engagement, will ſet his filial affection in a clear point of view.

In a very ſhort ſpace after his arrival on the continent, he began to think the writing a few lines every fortnight to his mother a piece of intolerable ſlavery.—And being, while at Rome, confined to his chamber, on account of a complaint which debarred him

him equally from pleaſure and amuſement, he thought this a commodious opportunity of anticipating the trouble of a correſpondence which was apt to break in upon him at leſs convenient ſeaſons. He therefore wrote a number of letters to his mother, a little varied in the expreſſion, and properly dated; theſe he arranged according to their dates, and then calling his valet de chambre,—"There," ſaid he, "carry one of theſe letters to the poſt-houſe every fortnight, and when they are exhauſted let me know, that I may prepare ſome more for the old lady."

It would be equally ſuperfluous and diſagreeable to follow Zeluco through the ſcenes of extravagance, folly, and vice, in which he acted a principal part for two or three years in the various towns of Italy. Although he had been happy during the whole of that ſhort period, it would have been happineſs rather too dearly bought at the expence of the miſery and remorſe he felt on finding his credit exhauſted, and his fortune involved to ſuch a degree, that nothing

nothing but a long and ſteady courſe of œconomy could poſſibly extricate it:—but he had not even the recollection of happineſs to comfort him for the ruin of his affairs;—his fortune had been diſſipated in debauchery, without pleaſure; in magnificence, which conferred not reſpect; and in gaming, which ſometimes drove him to the brink of deſperation. Let this general account ſave us from entering into a detail of adventures which bear the ſtrongeſt reſemblance to thoſe of ſo many profligate young men who have acted the ſame parts on the ſame theatre.

When his money and credit were nearly exhauſted, he joined his regiment at Naples; where, after having remained a decent time to intitle him to aſk a new leave of abſence, he made application for permiſſion to paſs over to Sicily for the arrangement of his domeſtic affairs.

On his return to Palermo he had no immediate reſource but in what his mother could ſpare him from her own jointure; and theſe ſupplies were not granted without

out ſtrong remonſtrances againſt his extravagance. Thoſe, however, he heard with apparent patience, and repeated aſſurances of amendment, as long as ſhe had either money or credit remaining; but when both were exhauſted, he ſhewed the ſame impatient and overbearing temper to her, that he had always given proofs of to the reſt of the world; but what in the one caſe ſhe had palliated as the ebullitions of youthful ſpirit and vivacity, in the other ſhe conſidered as the moſt unheard of cruelty and ingratitude.—In the bitterneſs of her heart, ſhe enumerated every inſtance of indulgence, generoſity, and affection ſhe had ſhewn him, and upbraided him for the returns he had made, in terms dictated by rage and diſappointment. He anſwered with the moſt inſulting coolneſs and the moſt ſtinging indifference. The unhappy woman was wounded to the ſoul.—She had looked forward with parental impatience to the hour of her ſon's return.—Her ſpirits had riſen or fallen as that happy epoch ſeemed to advance or to recede.—Her daily prayer;

and

and nightly dream, was this darling ſon's return, improved by experience, accompliſhed by travel, the object of univerſal admiration, while ſhe imagined that ſhe herſelf ſhould be envied by every mother in Palermo.

Her diſappointment was as ſevere as her hopes had been ſanguine.—She felt

> How ſharper than a ſerpent's tooth it is
> To have a thankleſs child.——

She retired to the houſe of a poor relation who lived in the neighbourhood of Palermo;—one whom ſhe had neglected in the pride of her proſperity; a circumſtance which made her miſery more acute, and her misfortunes leſs pitied. In this retreat, after languiſhing a few months, ſhe died heart-broken.

The emotions of remorſe which took place on this event, in the conſcious mind of Zeluco, were not of long duration;—his embarraſſed circumſtances gave him more laſting uneaſineſs; for, notwithſtanding his eſtate was now diſburdened of his mother's jointure, he was ſtill under the neceſſity

neceſſity of confining himſelf to a very ſcanty revenue.

Being mortified with the idea of remaining either in Sicily or the kingdom of Naples while his affairs were in this embarraſſed ſituation, he applied to a brother of his father, an officer of rank in the Spaniſh ſervice, who was then at Madrid, declaring a deſire of entering into that ſervice, on condition of obtaining the ſame rank in the Spaniſh ſervice which he had in the Neapolitan, with the hope of future promotion. He had already got leave from the Neapolitan court for this ſtep, with a recommendation from the miniſter. His plan was to put his eſtate under management till ſuch time as the moſt preſſing debts were cleared; and he thought, with the remainder of his fortune added to his pay, he ſhould paſs his time more to his mind in the character of a ſoldier, than he could by obſerving a languid ſyſtem of œconomy in Sicily.

CHAP. V.

The Love of a very young Lady.

Fallere credentem non eſt operoſa puellam
Gloria. OVID EPIST.

WHILE Zeluco waited the reſult of this application, a young lady of Palermo became, by the ſudden death of her brother, heireſs of a very conſiderable fortune; for although her father was ſtill alive, and her mother only forty years of age, yet as ſhe had not proved pregnant for many years, the daughter's ſucceeding to her father's whole fortune was conſidered as next to infallible. This certainly was the opinion of Zeluco, and he immediately applied every art of inſinuation he was poſſeſſed of, to gain the affections of this young lady.

Zeluco was of a very elegant as well as vigorous make; his perſon was finely proportioned; and although ſome people who pretended

pretended to ſkill in phyſiognomy aſſerted, that they could detect the indications of ill-nature and of a vicious diſpoſition in his countenance; yet, in the general opinion, and particularly in that of Signora Roſolia (the young lady in queſtion), he was a very handſome man. Roſolia was one of thoſe young ladies who, when they greatly approve of a man's face and figure, are inclined to believe that every other good quality is added thereunto.

A gentleman, ſuperior to Zeluco in all reſpects but external figure, had for ſome time, with the approbation of her parents, paid his addreſſes to her. But no ſooner had the new lover made a declaration of his paſſion, than he appeared in her eyes preferable to the old. On what this preference was founded appeared afterwards, when Zeluco lamented his hard fate in having a rival who was countenanced by both her parents; for Roſolia then aſſured him, that this could proceed ſolely from their not being informed of Zeluco's ſentiments; "But as ſoon as they are," added

ſhe,

ſhe, " they will certainly prefer you as a ſon-in-law to Signor Michelo."

" I am extremely happy to know that you are of that opinion," cried Zeluco.

" I am quite certain of it," ſaid ſhe.

" You have heard them ſpeak upon the ſubject then," ſaid he.

" No, never;" replied ſhe.

" Idol of my ſoul," cried Zeluco, " how then are you certain that they would prefer me to Signor Michelo?"

" Becauſe," replied this judicious young lady, " there is no compariſon between you. Every body that has eyes muſt ſee that you are a far handſomer man."

However flattering it might ſeem, Zeluco was a good deal diſappointed when he was informed of the circumſtance on which ſhe founded her hopes, and he thought his ſureſt courſe was to get poſſeſſion of the young lady's fortune and perſon in the firſt place, and to ſolicit the father and mother's conſent afterwards.

Having expreſſed his gratitude on account of the favourable ſentiments ſhe en-

tertained of him, he told her, "That parents often viewed things of this nature in a different light from their children—That his rival had probably ſecured the favour of her father and mother, by applying to them in the firſt inſtance; becauſe her fortune, not her heart, was that gentleman's ſole object.—That he, on the contrary, had given no hint of his paſſion to *them*, but had applied directly to *her*, becauſe it was her heart alone that he was ſolicitous about. As for fortune, it was what he had always deſpiſed, and had not the leaſt weight with him in his preſent ſuit;—of which diſintereſted way of thinking he was ready to give her an immediate proof, by marrying her ſecretly without any perſon's conſent but her own, and without the certainty of a ſingle ſequin."

The young lady, in anſwer to this, told him, "That ſhe could not comply with his propoſal without impiety; for that her mother had been alarmed on a former occaſion with the aſſiduities of a perſon ſhe did not approve, had conducted her to the *Madre*

Chieſa, and in the chapel of St. Roſolia, in the preſence of the ſaint herſelf, had made her pledge her ſolemn promiſe, never to give her hand in marriage without the conſent of her father and mother; aſſuring her, at the ſame time, that they, on their part, ſhould never exact of her to marry any man contrary to her inclination."

"It is impoſſible for me therefore," added this pious young lady, "to break the engagement, without incurring the diſpleaſure not only of my parents but alſo of my patroneſs, who hitherto hath always diſplayed great kindneſs to me, and will certainly not eaſily forgive the breach of an engagement to which ſhe herſelf was an eye-witneſs."

Zeluco, perceiving that the idea of provoking St. Roſolia filled the lady's mind with horror, did not think it prudent to inſiſt at that time on the point he wiſhed to carry;—he took her promiſe, however, that ſhe would not mention what had paſſed to her parents, till he had time to reflect on what were the propereſt meaſures to adopt.

This injunction ſhe punctually obſerved. —At their next interview, he told Roſolia, that he had been conſidering what ſhe had ſaid, regarding the promiſe ſhe had given to her mother in the chapel of her patroneſs; "That he was not ſurpriſed to find this made great impreſſion on one of her piety and underſtanding. This, and ſimilar inſtances of the goodneſs of her diſpoſition," he ſaid, "endeared her to him more and more; for although the graces of her face and perſon had made the firſt impreſſion on his heart, yet it was the beauties of her mind, the amiable ſweetneſs of her diſpoſition, her piety, and above all her admirable good ſenſe, that rivetted his chains." Zeluco had an opinion, that people in general are moſt gratified when praiſed for thoſe qualities in which they are moſt deficient. On this principle, he never failed to praiſe this young lady on the ſuperior excellency of her underſtanding.

He then proceeded to obſerve, that with reſpect to the engagement which ſhe imagined

gined ſhe had entered into at the Madre Chieſa, ſhe had evidently been ſurpriſed into it, and it was not to be ſuppoſed that St. Roſolia could, *in her heart*, approve of ſo raſh a vow, eſpecially as it had been made without her previous conſent; adding, that as for himſelf, he was certain that he ſhould not ſurvive the refuſal he was ſure of receiving from her mother:—he therefore left it to the young lady to conſider, whether it was probable that St. Roſolia, her patroneſs, and without a doubt the moſt compaſſionate of all the ſaints, would approve of a meaſure which would infallibly occaſion the death of a perſon who was, and had ever been, her faithful votary. And all for what? To gratify hard-hearted parents, who only conſulted their own avarice, and diſregarded true love.

As the tenderneſs of this young lady's heart was equal to the weakneſs of her underſtanding, and both infinitely ſurpaſſed thoſe graces and beauties which Zeluco had ſo liberally imputed to her, ſhe began to be convinced by his reaſoning, and melted by

his intreaties; but having, in the courſe of their converſation, ſaid, that ſhe was quite certain of prevailing on her father at leaſt to give *his* conſent,—for he had always been in the higheſt degree indulgent to her, and never had, in any one inſtance, withſtood her perſevering ſolicitation,—Zeluco, contrary to his firſt opinion, thought it would be moſt prudent to allow her to try to move her father; and if, in ſpite of her ſanguine hope, ſhe ſhould fail, he ſtill would have it in his power to perſuade her into a ſecret marriage.

CHAP. VI.

The Reaſoning of a young Lady in Love.— The Weakneſs of a Father.

THE impatience of the lady's love made her ſeize the very earlieſt opportunity of acquainting her father with the ſtate of her heart, which ſhe did in very pathetic terms.

The aſtoniſhed father at firſt inſiſted on the encouragement which had been given to her firſt lover, the real worth of his character, and the advantages of ſuch a connection. To theſe arguments the lady oppoſed her love for Zeluco, and her indifference for the other.

The father hinted at the embarraſſed ſituation of Zeluco's circumſtances.

The lady declared, that this gave her peculiar ſatisfaction, becauſe it afforded a proof to the whole world, that in ſo ma-

terial a point as the choice of a huſband, ſhe was ſuperior to all low and ſordid conſiderations, which could not fail of raiſing her in the eſteem of the judicious, and would for ever inſure to her the gratitude, as well as the love, of her huſband.

The father ſuggeſted, that while ſhe thus proved the diſintereſted purity of her own conduct, ſhe could not be certain that her lover was actuated by the ſame noble and diſintereſted motives.

To this the daughter, with equal readineſs and warmth, replied, 'That Zeluco had already given the moſt undoubted proofs of the generous turn of his mind; his ſuperiority to all mercenary views and ſordid conſiderations, by the magnificent manner in which he had ſpent the greateſt part of his own fortune.

The father ſhook his head with an air of diſſatisfaction, and then mentioned the libertine character of Zeluco, the number of women he had ſeduced, and his neglect of them afterwards; dwelling, with emphaſis,

phaſis, on the cruel treatment of the counteſs Brunella's niece.

This was an unlucky argument, and produced an effect directly contrary to what was intended. The young lady acknowledged, that "Zeluco had been wild and rakiſh;—moſt young men of ſpirit were;—that he had turned the heads of many young women—no wonder, he was ſo very genteel and handſome;—that he had afterwards neglected them becauſe he found them unworthy of his eſteem, and they, of courſe, accuſed him of inconſtancy;—that Signora Brunella's niece was a *very weak young woman*; it was not to be ſuppoſed a man of Zeluco's good ſenſe would ever dream of taking ſuch a perſon for his wife;—that, for her own part, ſhe was aware, that by entirely poſſeſſing a man ſo greatly admired by all other women, ſhe muſt be expoſed to the envy of her own ſex;—but that internal tranquillity, and domeſtic happineſs, would enable her to deſpiſe their diſappointment and malice; for

for ſhe knew that Zeluco had fixed his heart upon her, and her alone; was now determined to reform, and to be conſtant; and all the world allowed that reformed rakes made the very beſt of huſbands."

The young lady's laſt arguments ſeeming rather to alarm than convince her father, ſhe had recourſe to a method of reaſoning which ſhe had often found ſucceſsful when all others failed.—She burſt into a flood of tears, ſobbed as if ſhe had been ready to expire; and when ſhe recovered her voice, declared that her heart was fixed upon Signor Zeluco, who had given her the ſureſt proofs of the ſincerity of his love, and of his noble and generous character;—that happineſs in marriage depended on mutual affection and endleſs paſſion, and not at all upon fortune;—that ſhe would wander over the wide world with her lover, bleſt in his fidelity, and depending on St. Roſolia for protection and ſuſtenance, rather than live in the greateſt affluence with any other man, although he were

were the firſt monarch on earth, or even the king of Naples, Jeruſalem, and the Two Sicilies himſelf:—that theſe were her unalterable ſentiments, or if any alteration could happen, it would be that of an increaſe, not a diminution, of her love, for ſhe felt it augmenting every hour; and finally, ſhe intreated, on her knees, that he would prove himſelf an affectionate father to a daughter who had always loved and honoured him, and would obey him in every thing but in this one point, which, ſhe was ſorry to ſay, was out of her power; and which, if he inſiſted upon, he would ſoon behold her laid in the ſame grave with her deareſt brother, whom he had ſo long and ſo bitterly lamented.

Before the daughter had finiſhed this affecting addreſs, the good-natured father was alſo in tears, and as ſoon as he was able to ſpeak, he raiſed her up, with an aſſurance that her happineſs was his chief object in life, and he would do every thing ſhe could deſire to promote it.

Having

Having thus melted her father to compliance, ſhe begged, in the next place, that he would uſe his influence with her mother, that ſhe might likewiſe conſent to the only meaſure that could make her truly happy, which the good-natured man engaged to do.

CHAP. VII.

The Prudence of a Mother;—and Termination of everlaſting Love.

THE father ſpeedily had an opportunity of breaking the ſubject to his Lady, aſſuring her at the ſame time that he was convinced their daughter would never marry any man but Zeluco; ſo that ſhe had beſt ſave herſelf the trouble of endeavouring to prevent it, as he had already ſaid every thing that could be ſaid, and without effect.

He was then proceeding to give her an account of the ſcene which had paſſed between them, when ſhe ſaved him the trouble, informing him that ſhe had overheard the whole in an adjoining room, where ſhe happened to be when his daughter had made the pathetic attack upon him above deſcribed. Perceiving that her huſband's heart was quite melted by the daughter's

daughter's tears, and his reſolution moulded to her views, ſhe declined all diſcuſſion with him; and thought it not prudent to let him into the plan which ſhe had already formed in her mind, to diſentangle her daughter from a connexion fraught with ruin and remorſe. She contented herſelf therefore with ſaying coolly, "That although ſhe did not much reliſh the match, yet, as ſhe could not think of croſſing her daughter's inclinations, ſhe certainly would not perſiſt in oppoſition, if, on full deliberation, the young lady continued in the ſame mind; and at all events ſhe would take no ſtep without the concurrence of her huſband, who, ſhe was pleaſed to add, was a much better judge in a matter of ſuch importance than ſhe could pretend to be."

In reply to this the huſband ſaid, "That he candidly acknowledged that he was *a far better judge*; adding, that it was impoſſible for him ever to change his mind."

"Not quite, my dear," ſaid the wife meekly; "you were under the neceſſity of

of changing your mind before you could relinquish the *unalterable* resolution you told me yesterday you had formed, of giving your daughter to Signor Michelo, whom we then equally approved of."

"I did not know *yesterday*," said he, a little disconcerted, "that Zeluco was the *only* man who could make our daughter happy."

He then went and acquainted his daughter that he had prevailed on her mother to consent to her marriage with Zeluco.

The young lady flew in a transport of joy to her mother; asked her forgiveness for having disposed of her heart without consulting so indulgent a parent; informed her, that she was now absolutely certain of St. Rosolia's being pleased with her choice; and assured her, that for the future she would be the most obedient and dutiful of all daughters.

The mother thanked her for her good intentions, and asked her how she came to be so certain of the Saint's acquiescence.

"Because,"

"Becauſe," replied the pious young lady, "as I have been able to think or even to dream of nothing for ſome time but my marriage with Signor Zeluco, after attending maſs this very morning, I retired to the chapel of the Saint, and looking her devoutly in the face, and watching her eyes, I humbly entreated to know whether ſhe approved of my paſſion or not?—On which, the ſweet image of Roſolia looked in the moſt propitious manner;—and at length, with a gracious ſmile, nodded aſſent."

"Nay," ſaid the mother, "after ſuch a teſtimony of approbation there can be no doubt.—And have you equal proofs, my dear, of Signor Zeluco's love?"

"Stronger, if poſſible," anſwered the daughter;—"he has ſworn it to me an hundred times; and beſides, I have it under his hand."

"Theſe are proofs indeed," ſaid the mother; "and," continued ſhe, "you have no reaſon to doubt that all this love

is for you alone, independent of your fortune!"

"Santa Maria!" exclaimed the daughter, "Signor Zeluco is not only the moſt loving, but alſo the moſt diſintereſted, of mankind.—He has often aſſured me, that he ſhould be ſtill happier if my fortune were leſs, that he might prove to the world how far he is above all mean and mercenary views."

"Then it is highly probable," ſaid the mother, "that he will enjoy the felicity he ſo earneſtly deſires; for I ſhall now inform you, my dear, of what I did not chuſe to hint till I was quite certain of it: I am ſeveral months gone with child, which, at any rate, will reduce your fortune one half; and in caſe of a ſon, will leave you a very moderate portion."

"I wiſh with all my heart you may have a ſon, my dear mother; for I ſhould like a little brother of all things," cried Roſolia.

"Very well, my dear," ſaid the mother; "you will probably obtain your

wiſh. But," continued ſhe, " I ſuppoſe you would not wiſh that your marriage ſhould take place till I am recovered of my lying-in, that I may join in the pleaſure of ſuch an occaſion."

" Good heaven! certainly not," anſwered the daughter; and immediately went, in raptures, to communicate theſe glad tidings to Zeluco, whoſe joy at the parents acquieſcence was prodigiouſly damped on hearing of the ſituation of the mother. His chagrin was evident on his countenance.

" I perceive," ſaid the young lady tenderly, " that the poſtponing of our happineſs till my mother ſhall be delivered grieves you."

" Very ſeverely indeed," ſaid Zeluco. " Be not afflicted, my dear Zeluco," ſaid this love-ſick maiden: " I will endeavour to prevail on her to conſent to our union before ſhe is delivered."

Zeluco begged ſhe would not attempt it, as it might give offence, and render her mother averſe to the match altogether.

She

She then, in the moſt endearing manner, aſſured him, that the delay gave her very near as much uneaſineſs as it could him; but he, on the other hand, proteſted, that he felt the diſappointment with greater poignancy than ſhe could poſſibly do, which, however, he would endeavour to bear, rather than riſk diſobliging her mother, eſpecially in her preſent condition, when the ſmalleſt importunity might injure her precious health.

"But, good God!" added he, "did you never before ſuſpect that ſhe was in this condition?"

"Never," ſaid this penetrating young lady; "though I am ſurpriſed at it; for the moment ſhe mentioned it, I plainly perceived that her waiſt was uncommonly large."

Zeluco retired, in all the agonies of diſappointment; but determined to be more fully informed before he gave up a purſuit on which he had founded the re-eſtabliſhment of his fortune.

He called the following morning on a certain monk, who occaſionally exerciſed the function of a phyſician, and was known to be employed in that capacity by the mother of Signora Roſolia.

After an affected conſultation on his own health, he turned the converſation on her's.

The wary mother, having thought it probable that Zeluco might queſtion this man, had prepared him in what manner to anſwer his inquiries: the medical monk, therefore, aſſured Zeluco, that ſhe was in the way that he, and the beſt friends of her family, could wiſh.

"What, is it true, then," replied Zeluco, "*what I have with ſo much pleaſure heard,* Signora Maria is really with child?"

"Nothing of that nature can be more certain," replied the Phyſician, "than that ſhe is pregnant of one child; ſome think from her appearance that ſhe will have twins."

"Twins!" cried Zeluco.

"Yes,

"Yes, Signor," continued the Doctor; "that is the opinion of ſome who are thought judges in ſuch matters; but, in my own mind, no indications however ſtrong can aſcertain the point with ſuch preciſion as thoſe people pretend;—that ſhe has one lively child ſeems beyond a doubt; that ſhe will have two, I will not poſitively aſſert."

"Why, Doctor," ſaid Zeluco, "it is a very long time ſince ſhe was in the ſame ſituation."

"If ſhe has twins," replied the monk gravely, "ſhe never was preciſely in the ſame ſituation; it is true, indeed, that when a woman has once had twins, ſhe will afterwards be more likely to have them again."

"Pray, how long is it ſince ſhe had her laſt child?" ſaid Zeluco.

"About nine or ten years," replied the Phyſician.

"Is it not uncommon, after ſuch an interval, for a woman to recommence bearing children?" ſaid Zeluco.

"It *is* a little ſingular," replied the monk; "but when a woman does recommence, ſhe generally proceeds with more ſpirit and perſeverance than if no ſuch interruption had taken place:—therefore, as Signora Maria is only forty years of age, I ſhould not be ſurpriſed if, by the favour of the Bleſſed Virgin, who is her patroneſs, ſhe ſhould have ſeveral children before ſhe leaves off child-bearing entirely."

"Several children!" repeated Zeluco, with an accent of anger;—"you muſt imagine her patroneſs has prodigious powers in ſuch matters."

"Do you call the powers of the Bleſſed Virgin in queſtion?" replied the monk, in a threatening tone.

"Heavens forbid, father," ſaid Zeluco, with an expiatory look.

"Let me tell you, Signor," continued the monk in an authoritative ſtyle, "that the powers of the Virgin are unlimited; it were impiety to doubt it."

"I have not the leaſt doubt," cried Zeluco, taking the monk in an affectionate manner

manner by the hand:—"ſo far from calling her power in queſtion, I am convinced, my dear father," added he, with a hypocritical accent, "that ſhe could bring it about without the aſſiſtance of the huſband."

"Unqueſtionably ſhe could," ſaid the monk.

Zeluco being now perſuaded of the reality of Signora Maria's pregnancy, took his leave of the monk; and having two days before received a letter from his uncle at Madrid, aſſuring him of promotion in the Spaniſh ſervice, he reſolved to ſet out for that city as ſoon as poſſible. When he received the letter, his determination had been to ſecure his marriage with Signora Roſolia in the firſt place, and then deliberate what anſwer he ſhould make to his uncle's letter; but having now reſolved to have nothing more to do with the fair object of his diſintereſted and unalterable affection, he ſeized the opportunity of a veſſel ready to ſail for Barcelona; embarked with a ſingle ſervant, and a very moderate

quantity of baggage; and after a proſperous voyage arrived at that city. Being very impatient to get quickly to Madrid, he ordered his ſervant to have every thing prepared for the journey as ſoon as poſſible. While theſe arrangements were making, he intended to have amuſed himſelf by ſauntering through the town, but was prevented by a heavy ſhower of rain.—"I do not know what in the devil's name to do with myſelf," ſaid Zeluco.—"You had as well take this opportunity of writing to Signora Roſolia," ſaid his valet;—"ſhe may perhaps be a little ſurpriſed at our ſudden departure."—"Ay, ſo I will; bring me pen, ink, and paper," ſaid Zeluco, yawning.

The ſervant ſupplied him with the materials for writing; and this ardent lover, renewing his fits of yawning very frequently during the performance, at laſt finiſhed the epiſtle.

Signora Roſolia, when ſhe heard of Zeluco's having ſailed for Spain, immediately fainted, as is uſual with young ladies when

when they are abandoned by men who pretend to be dying for them, and whom they conſider as the only men who can make them happy.—She continued for ſome weeks ſubject to hyſterical affections: theſe, however, gradually diſappeared; and her old lover, by the mediation of her mother, renewing his courtſhip, ſhe was in due time prevailed on to give him her hand. Her mother then informed her, that ſhe was miſtaken in the notion of her being with child. And the day after her marriage, the daughter in return declared to her mother, that ſhe herſelf had undoubtedly miſtaken the image of St. Roſolia, being now convinced, that her preſent huſband was the only man who could make her completely happy.

"I hope, my dear," ſaid the mother, "he is the only man who ever will attempt it."

CHAP. VIII.

His Generoſity gets Credit for what was due to his Reſentment.

ZELUCO was received in the kindeſt manner by his uncle at Madrid, who viewed his paſt extravagances in the moſt favourable light, conſidering them as entirely proceeding from youthful vivacity and imprudence. He therefore treated him with all the reſpect due to the head of his own family; introduced him to every houſe of diſtinction; flattering himſelf, that the ardent ſpirit of his nephew might excite him to the ſame impetuous purſuit of military glory with which he had followed pleaſure, and fondly hoping that he would one day arrive at higher diſtinction than he would have attained by an unambitious prudence of conduct in the Neapolitan ſervice, which afforded no opportunity

portunity of diſplaying military genius. After pointing out the advantages he would derive from his birth, he inculcated the neceſſity of diſtinguiſhing himſelf by activity as an officer, that he might give an early impreſſion in his favour, and ſmooth the way to that rapid promotion he had reaſon to expect, from his exertions in an army where diſcipline was greatly relaxed, and in which few men of rank diſtinguiſhed themſelves.

Zeluco was appointed to a regiment then on its march to one of the ſea-port towns, but with permiſſion to remain at Madrid till the troops ſhould arrive at the place of their deſtination, and were completed. He ſpent this interval in thoſe ſocieties to which he had been introduced by his uncle, and being ſufficiently ſenſible of the graces of his own perſon, he was not without hopes of engaging the affections of ſome female as wealthy as Signora Roſolia, and whoſe mother was leſs liable to pregnancy.

At ſome of thoſe aſſemblies, gaming to a conſiderable depth, was permitted.

Zeluco had always been fond of play, and had acquired, at the uſual expence, a very great knowledge in moſt games; yet he by no means poſſeſſed that degree of coolneſs and command of temper which is requiſite for a gameſter: he was ſenſible of this himſelf, but he could not always reſiſt the temptation of gaming; and ſometimes, not ſatisfied with the play at the aſſemblies, he went in ſearch of deeper ſtakes at leſs creditable houſes.

At firſt he was fortunate, which encouraged him to attend thoſe houſes more conſtantly. One unlucky evening, however, he loſt all the money he had about him, amounting to a conſiderable ſum; moſt part of it was won by a perſon who had lately appeared at Madrid, aſſuming the character of an Hungarian gentleman, with the rank of a lieutenant-colonel of Huſſars in the Emperor's ſervice. As the company played for ready money only, when Zeluco had loſt his, he ſat in very ill-humour, looking over thoſe who continued to play: in this diſpoſition it was not unnatural in

him

him to ſuſpect that the perſon who had won his money, had, by other means beſides ſuperior ſkill in the game, aſſiſted his own good fortune. Zeluco watched him with the moſt malignant attention, wiſhing to detect him in ſome unfair trick, and ready to quarrel with him even if he ſhould not.

The game was paſs-dice. A young ſtranger held the dice, and had already won four times; and as his whole money had been covered each time, the ſum before him was now ſixteen times larger than what he had originally ſtaked. But while he ſeemed preparing to throw a fifth time, there was only about a third part of the money which he now had on the table taken by the company.

On obſerving this, the ſtranger ſaid, "Does nobody chooſe to take more?" Every body declined, on which he put the reſidue of the money into his pocket; but as he ſhook the box, being about to throw, the Huſſar officer cried, Banco; and the others took up what they had ſtaked.

The

The rule of the game is, that if any one perſon offers to take the whole, the reſt of the company, who have taken ſmaller ſums, immediately withdraw their money in favour of the perſon who offers to ſtand againſt the entire bank; that is to ſay, the whole ſum which the perſon who holds the dice has on the table.

The Huſſar meant to avail himſelf of the equivocal ſituation of the caſe: if the dice ſhould prove fortunate to the thrower, he intended to pay the exact ſum on the table; but in caſe the dice turned againſt the ſtranger, he reſolved to claim not only that, but alſo what the young gentleman had juſt put into his pocket.

The ſtranger threw and loſt. "Take your money," ſaid he, ſhoving the whole parcel to the Hungarian.

The latter inſiſted on having that alſo which he had put into his pocket, ſaying, it belonged to the bank as much as what remained on the table, ſince there had been no intervening throw.

The

The young gentleman was aſtoniſhed at this demand, aſſerting, that the money he had pocketed was entirely out of the queſtion, having been withdrawn before the Hungarian had ſpoken. That if the officer meant both ſums, he ought to have declared that meaning when he called Banco; adding, that in caſe he had done ſo, or if the company had ſet againſt the whole of his winning, he himſelf had determined to paſs the box, and not have riſked ſo great a ſum at one throw.

This pretended colonel, however, who was a ſtout man, with a long ſabre and a formidable pair of whiſkers, was loud and boiſterous in aſſerting his right to the whole. The ſtranger defended his cauſe but faintly; the company in general, whatever they thought of the juſtice of the caſe, did not ſeem diſpoſed to aſſert the ſtranger's claim againſt this ferocious Huſſar.

In this ſtate of affairs, Zeluco, who burned with reſentment againſt the perſon who had won his money, ſaid, "It was a clear caſe, and that the Hungarian had a right

right to nothing but the ſum on the table when he firſt ſpoke;" adding, "he was convinced if he had loſt he would have paid no more." "How, Sir!—what do you mean?" cried the Hungarian, turning fiercely round to Zeluco. "I mean preciſely what I ſaid," replied the latter. "What, Sir!" repeated the Huſſar, in a loud tone of voice, and putting his hand to his ſword. "Yes, Sir," cried Zeluco, "and further, I mean to cut the throat of any raſcally adventurer who dares be inſolent to me:" ſaying this, he half drew his ſword, when the company interpoſed. The Huſſar affected not to have heard Zeluco's laſt words, but ſaid, in a ſoftened tone, that if the company were of opinion that his claim was not ſtrictly juſt, he was willing to yield it.—"Willing or unwilling, you ſhall yield it," cried Zeluco; and the company being *now* unanimous in favour of the ſtranger, the pretended Hungarian officer withdrew from the aſſembly, and next morning early he left Madrid, afraid that this incident would produce

produce an inveſtigation exceedingly prejudicial to him, being conſcious that he had no title to the character he aſſumed.

This adventure was much talked of, and did a great deal of honour to Zeluco. It was peculiarly agreeable to his generous uncle, who having heard that his nephew had been unfortunate on the night in which he had behaved with ſuch ſpirit, he preſented him with a ſum ſufficient for clearing all his expences at Madrid, and equipping him in the genteeleſt manner for his expedition to the Weſt Indies. Zeluco himſelf, having no immediate proſpect of meeting with another Roſolia, grew tired of the formality of Madrid, and impatient to join his regiment, which he underſtood had now arrived at the headquarters.

This reſolution being communicated to the uncle, was imputed by him to a laudable zeal for the ſervice. The worthy veteran aſſured him, that he would take particular care of his intereſt, and aſſiſt his promotion with all his influence at court,

making no doubt but his efforts for that purpoſe would be rendered ſucceſsful by the riſing reputation of Zeluco.

The regiment was in a very ſhort time completed, and ſoon after embarked for the iſland of Cuba, where it arrived in ſafety.

CHAP. IX.

La ferocité naturelle fait moins de cruels que l'amour-propre. Duc de la ROCHEFOUCAULT.

The Remonſtrance of an old Officer.

ZELUCO poſſeſſed not the generous ardour of a ſoldier; his impatience for promotion was excited by the hopes of emolument, more than a thirſt for military glory; and if he was willing to ſuffer fatigue and incur danger, it was becauſe in his preſent ſituation they were neceſſary for his obtaining ſome lucrative command, that might ſpeedily furniſh him with the means of pleaſure and luxurious enjoyment, which he conſidered as the only ſenſible purſuits in life.

Having heard that the commander in chief was a very ſtrict and attentive officer, and Zeluco's views being now centered in military promotion, he was impatient to acquire favour and recommendation by

diſtinguiſhing himſelf as a diſciplinarian. Naturally ſelfiſh and unfeeling, he was not checked in the proſecution of this plan by any ſentiment of juſtice or compaſſion; provided he could make the men under his command more dextrous in their exerciſe, or more ſmart in their appearance, than others, he regarded not the inconveniency or torture he occaſioned to them; nor did he care whether this was of uſe to the ſervice or not; he was convinced it might be of uſe to himſelf, and that was ſufficient. Without temper to make allowance for the awkwardneſs of recruits, or equity in proportioning puniſhments to crimes, his orders were often dictated by caprice and enforced with cruelty; he exacted from the private men ſuch a degree of preciſion in the manual exerciſe, and in the minutiæ of their dreſs, as was almoſt out of the power of the moſt dextrous and beſt diſpoſed to obſerve.

Provoked and irritated on finding that the ſoldiers did not arrive at that degree of perfection which his vanity required, and becoming

becoming daily more unreaſonable and unrelenting by the exerciſe of power, he exhibited many inſtances of cruelty on a detachment from the garriſon of Havannah, of which he had for ſome time the command.

His conduct on that and other occaſions came to the knowledge of the commander in chief by the following incident:

A ſoldier having committed ſome ſlight miſtake in the exerciſe, Zeluco treated him with great ſeverity, which the man endured with all the paſſiveneſs which military diſcipline exacts;—till Zeluco, ſwelling with the inſolence of power, expreſſed himſelf in this barbarous and abſurd manner: "If you are not more alert for the future, you ſcoundrel, I will cut you to pieces, and ſend your ſoul to hell."

To this the man replied with tranquillity —"Your honour may cut me to pieces, if you pleaſe; but I thank God it is not in your power to ſend my ſoul to hell."

This very ſedate anſwer, while it raiſed a ſmile in others who heard it, augmented the rage of Zeluco.

"Do you mutiny, villain?" cried Zeluco.

"I do not, indeed," ſaid the ſoldier.

"I'll let you know in due time," ſaid Zeluco, "whether you do or not."

He ordered the man to be carried to the guard priſon and put in irons.

Zeluco had been long diſliked by all his fellow-officers.—On talking over this matter with ſome of them, in order to prepoſſeſs them with the opinion that what the ſoldier had ſaid amounted to mutiny, he found them little diſpoſed to conſider it in that light; he was in no haſte, therefore, to bring the man to a court-martial, being convinced he would be acquitted: but he had it inſinuated to the ſoldier himſelf, that if he would acknowledge a mutinous intention, and implore mercy, he ſhould be liberated without a trial; whereas, if he were tried, he would certainly be ſeverely puniſhed.

But the ſoldier, ſecretly encouraged by thoſe of the officers who moſt deteſted Zeluco, refuſed to make any ſuch avowal, and remained in irons.

Mean-

Meanwhile the chaplain of the regiment having viſited the ſoldier, approved of his conduct, declaring he could not juſtly be puniſhed for an anſwer ſo orthodox. He next day informed the commander in chief of the whole tranſaction.

This gentleman, unwilling to rely intirely on the account he had received, ſent for ſome of the officers belonging to the detachment, and obtained from them the ſame information which he had already received from the chaplain.

In the mean time Zeluco, having got a hint of what was going on, freed the ſoldier from confinement. But the indignation of the commanding officer being rouſed by what he had heard, he made inquiries into Zeluco's conduct to the ſoldiers on other occaſions; and ſoon diſcovered, with aſtoniſhment, and ſome degree of ſelf-condemnation, that many acts of unneceſſary ſeverity and oppreſſion had been committed by Zeluco. Having blamed ſome officers, whoſe duty he thought it was to have informed him of thoſe tranſactions

ſooner, he ſent for Zeluco, and in the preſence of all the officers of the battalion to which he belonged, he addreſſed him to the following effect:

"Signor ZELUCO,

"I think it my duty to deliver my ſentiments to you before theſe gentlemen, on a ſubject that ought to be well underſtood by every officer; but of which it appears by your conduct you have formed very erroneous notions.

"Strict diſcipline is eſſentially requiſite for the well-being of an army; without which it degenerates into a lawleſs mob, more formidable to their friends than enemies; the ravagers, not the defenders of their country.

"But it is equally eſſential that diſcipline be exerciſed with temper and with juſtice; a capricious and cruel exertion of power in officers depreſſes the ſpirits of the private men, and extinguiſhes that daring ardour which glows in the breaſt of a real ſoldier.

"Is

"Is it poſſible that a man of a generous mind can treat with wanton cruelty thoſe who are not permitted to reſiſt, or even to expoſtulate, however brave they may be?

"I believe, Sir, you have not as yet ſerved in time of war; but I will inform you, that in the courſe of my ſervices I have ſeen common ſoldiers gallantly face the enemy, when ſome officers, who had been in the habit of uſing them with inſult and cruelty, ſhrunk from the danger.

"You are ſufficiently acquainted with the condition of private ſoldiers to know, that when they are treated with all the lenity conſiſtent with proper diſcipline, ſtill their condition is ſurrounded with ſuch a variety of hardſhips, that every perſon of humanity muſt wiſh it were poſſible to alleviate it.

"Only reflect, Sir, on the ſmallneſs of their pay; how inadequate to the duty required of them, and how far beneath the intrinſic value it bore when it was firſt fixed; yet this grievance remains unremedied in ſome of the wealthieſt countries of Europe,

Europe, even in thoſe where the greateſt attention is paid in other particulars to the rights of mankind. But weak as the impreſſion may be which the ſoldiers' hardſhips make on the cold heart of the politician, one would naturally expect they ſhould meet with ſympathy in the breaſts of their own officers; the men beſt acquainted with their ſituation, whom they are conſtantly ſerving and obeying, who are acting in the ſame cauſe, and expoſed to the ſame dangers though not to the ſame hardſhips with themſelves. It is natural to imagine that, independent of more generous motives, their own intereſt, and the idea of ſelf-preſervation, would prompt officers to behave with mildneſs, at leaſt with equity, to the ſoldiers under their command. How many officers have been reſcued from death or captivity by the grateful attachment and intrepidity of the ſoldiers? I myſelf, Sir, once lay on the field ſeverely wounded, when, in the midſt of general confuſion, officers and men flying promiſcuouſly, I was carried to a place

of ſecurity by two ſoldiers, at the infinite hazard of their own lives. From one of thoſe, indeed, I might naturally have expected ſome exertion in my favour; he was a Caſtilian, born on my own eſtate: but I had no claim on the other, except as an officer who had always behaved equitably to him in common with the reſt of my company;—he was an Iriſhman.

"Had I treated him with caprice or ill-nature, would this foreigner, or even would my own countryman, have made ſuch a generous exertion to preſerve my life? No, Sir; if they had refrained from giving me a freſh wound as they fled paſt me, which ſoldiers are not unapt to do to cruel officers, they certainly would at leaſt have conſulted their own ſafety by continuing their flight, and left me to be trampled to death by the enemy's cavalry, as I certainly muſt have been, had not theſe two ſoldiers removed me from the ſpot on which I lay.

"But waving every conſideration derived from the ideas of perſonal ſafety, there is another kind of ſelfiſhneſs which might induce

induce officers to behave well to ſoldiers; that is, the pleaſure of alleviating, in many reſpects, the unavoidable hardſhips of our fellow-creatures, and the conſciouſneſs of being loved by thoſe around us."

At this part of the general's remonſtrance, Zeluco raiſed his eyes mechanically with that kind of ſtare which a man gives when he hears what he thinks a very extraordinary propoſition.

"It is true, Sir, I aſſure you," continued the Caſtilian; "next to the approbation of his own conſcience, nothing is ſo grateful to the heart of man, as the love and eſteem of mankind. In my mind, he is an object of compaſſion, in whatever ſituation of life he may be placed, who is not ſenſible of this from his own experience; and ſurely no man can be tolerably happy, who thinks himſelf the object of their hatred.

"We all know, gentlemen," continued he, turning a moment from Zeluco to the other officers, "that the love of ſoldiers, important as it is to thoſe who command

them, may be acquired on eaſier terms than that of any other ſet of men; becauſe the habit of obedience in which *they* are bred, inclines them to *reſpect* their officers; unbiaſſed equity in the midſt of the ſtricteſt diſcipline commands their *eſteem*, and the ſmalleſt mark of kindneſs ſecures their *gratitude* and attachment. I have ever endeavoured to preſerve a ſteady and regular diſcipline among the troops I have had the honour of commanding; yet I have the happineſs to believe, that I am more loved than feared by thoſe among them you have had the beſt opportunity of knowing me.—One of the greateſt pleaſures I ever enjoyed (I ſee ſome here who were with me on that occaſion) was, in over-hearing an advanced guard of ſoldiers talk affectionately of me, when they knew not I was near them: I will own to you, Sir, it came over my heart like the ſweeteſt muſic: and if I thought myſelf the object of the ſecret execrations of the men under my command, it would ſpoil the harmony

of

of my life, and jar my whole ſoul out of tune.

"Signor Zeluco, what I have heard of your behaviour to the ſoldiers, I am willing to impute to a miſplaced zeal for the ſervice. It is difficult to believe, that a man of birth and education could have been prompted to the ſeverities you have exerciſed by other motives.

"This conſideration, joined to the regard I have for the recommendation of my old friend your uncle, have weighed with me, in not ſubjecting certain parts of your conduct to the judgment of a court-martial.

"With reſpect to the ſoldier whom you confined ſo long and ſo improperly in irons, you certainly treated him from the beginning with too much ſeverity. The natural awkwardneſs of a recruit is to be corrected gradually, and with gentleneſs; ſeverity confounds him, and increaſes the evil that is to be remedied. To give way to anger and paſſion on ſuch an occaſion, is inconſiſtent with the dignity which an officer

ought

ought to preſerve before the men, and is always attended with injuſtice. As for this man's anſwer to your very intemperate menace, although a ſoldier under arms ought not to make any reply to an officer, yet, all the circumſtances being weighed, what he ſaid was excuſable; to endeavour to torture it into mutiny would be abſurd.

"You ought to remember, gentlemen, that as military diſcipline looks to the general tendency and remote conſequences of things, more than to their intrinſic criminality, many actions are treated as crimes by the military laws, which in themſelves are innocent or frivolous. And when a ſoldier, irritated by undeſerved inſult, overleaps ſubordination, and repels the wanton tyranny of an officer, however he may be condemned by the unrelenting laws of diſcipline, he will be abſolved by the natural feelings of the human heart, which revolts at oppreſſion; nor will he appear, even in the eyes of thoſe who think his punishment expedient, an object either of contempt or averſion. But when an officer, armed with the

the power, and intrenched within the lines of diſcipline, indulges unmanly paſſion, or private hatred, againſt an unprotected and unreſiſting ſoldier, in what light can this officer appear, either in his own eyes, or in thoſe of others?

"Signor Zeluco, I have thought proper to explain my ſentiments to you thus fully before theſe gentlemen, who have been witneſſes to your conduct ſince you firſt joined the regiment, and who I do not think intirely free from blame for not making me acquainted with it. I have only to add, that the conſiderations which prevent my laying the whole before a court-martial, cannot operate a ſecond time. I hope, Sir, that for your own ſake you will keep this in your remembrance, that while I inſiſt upon all the troops under my command performing their duty with punctuality, I will not permit the pooreſt centinel to be treated with injuſtice.

"The ſoldier whom you uſed ſo harſhly may ſtill appeal, if he pleaſes, to a court-martial;

martial; it will be prudent in you to find means to prevent him."

Having ſaid this, the general diſmiſſed the company. Zeluco made a preſent to the ſoldier more than ſufficient to ſatisfy him. And his expectation of ſudden promotion in the army being greatly damped by the general's harangue, he formed the reſolution of quitting the road to military renown, and of turning into a path more agreeable to his talents, and from which he hoped to reap greater advantage.

CHAP. X.

Gratitude to a Friend.—Curioſity in a Maid.

ZELUCO had formed an acquaintance with a Spaniſh gentleman, to whom he had brought a recommendatory letter from his uncle at Madrid; and from whom he received daily marks of attention and civility. As this gentleman, though of but a moderate fortune, lived in a moſt hoſpitable ſtyle, and was of a character leſs reſerved than the Spaniards in general are, Zeluco found him a very convenient acquaintance, and cultivated his good opinion with ſuch aſſiduity that he gained at laſt his entire confidence. In the courſe of their intimacy, the Spaniard informed Zeluco that he had long paid his addreſſes to a widow lady poſſeſſed of a very valuable eſtate of her own, and a large ſum of money ſecured in mortgages on ſome of the beſt eſtates in the iſlands of Cuba and Hiſpaniola;

Hiſpaniola; that ſhe had, on his firſt making propoſals, proteſted in poſitive terms, according to the eſtabliſhed cuſtom of widows, againſt ever entering into a ſecond matrimonial engagement; but that of late he had obſerved with much ſatiſfaction, that her objections became gradually weaker, both in their nature and in the manner in which they were urged; and that he now had good hopes of their being ſoon removed altogether: that as her great fortune was entirely in her own power, as ſhe had no children, and was in herſelf a woman of good diſpoſition and of a cheerful temper, he expected many advantages and much domeſtic happineſs from the union.

Zeluco was introduced to this lady's acquaintance by her lover; and having made a cautious and minute enquiry into the ſtate of her finances, he was ſatisfied that they rather ſurpaſſed than fell ſhort of the account he had received of them; and from that moment formed the deſign of ſupplanting his unſuſpicious friend.

But he did not think it prudent to pay his court avowedly to a woman who was almoſt betrothed to another; and that other, a perſon from whom he received hourly civilities, and whom he acknowledged as his friend.

He aſſailed her, however, with the eloquence of glances and ſighs; which, while he *affected* to conceal them from her, he took particular care ſhould not eſcape her obſervation; and as often as they ſeemed to be diſcovered he endeavoured to bluſh, and then aſſumed an air of uneaſineſs and confuſion.

When he was in her company, which happened as often as he decently could, he added to this the moſt obſequious approbation of whatever ſhe ſaid; and the general tendency of his diſcourſe, though often addreſſed to others, was to adopt and illuſtrate thoſe ſentiments and opinions which he knew to be hers.

"By theſe means, aided by the graces of his perſon, he gradually made advances on the heart of the widow; and in a ſhort time

time gained a decided preference over the old lover. But although this ſkilful engineer was fully ſenſible of the impreſſion which he made, he declined ſending an open ſummons, truſting that his maſked battery of ſighs and glances would extort from the fortreſs itſelf a propoſal of ſurrender. To haſten which, he took care to engage the widow's confidential maid in his intereſt, by ordering his own valet to make aſſiduous love to her, and inſtructing him in what manner to proceed after he had gained her heart.

The attentive valet began his operations without loſs of time; having ſpent a few days in general courtſhip, he told her that he had ſomething of an important and very ſecret nature to communicate to her private ear.

"To my private ear!" cried the maid.

"Aſſuredly, my dear," ſaid the valet, "to your's, and to no other perſon's."

This ſo mightily raiſed the curioſity of the maid, that ſhe gave him a rendezvous in a grove of her miſtreſs's garden; merely,

as ſhe herſelf repeatedly aſſured him, to know what this important matter was; for ſhe owned it was beyond the compaſs of her power to divine what it could be.

The valet gained her heart as he had been ordered; and in the intervals of his own ſucceſsful paſſion he obſerved the other inſtructions of his maſter.

CHAP. XI.

Rien ne peſe tant qu'un ſecret;
Le porter loin eſt difficile aux dames;
Et je ſai meme ſur ce fait
Bon nombre d'hommes qui ſont femmes.
LA FONTAINE.

AFTER having lived for ſome time together in a ſtate of mutual happineſs, the valet preſented himſelf one day to his miſtreſs with every appearance of ſorrow; this tender-hearted maiden (for ſhe had never been married) affectionately inquired into the cauſe of his grief. The valet anſwered, "That it was all on account of his unhappy maſter, who, from being the moſt cheerful of mankind, was of late become the moſt dejected and heart-broken."

"Have you no notion," ſaid the maid, "what has occaſioned ſuch a melancholy change?"

"No notion!" replied the valet; "I know but too well what has brought it about."

"And pray, for goodneſs ſake, what can it be?" ſaid the maid impatiently.

"That," replied the valet, "is what no earthly conſideration will make me ever divulge."

"No!" cried the maid, "and for what reaſon?"

"Becauſe," ſaid the valet, "I have promiſed never to mention it to any human creature."

"I inſiſt upon knowing it immediately," ſaid the maid.

"I beg you will not," cried the valet; "it would be horrid in me to divulge a ſecret with which I have been intruſted—my maſter never would forgive me."

"Your *miſtreſs* never will forgive you, if you do not," ſaid the maid.

"Only conſider what you require of me," rejoined the valet; "to break my truſt! To preſs ſuch a thing is an attack on my honour."

"Well,"

"Well," exclaimed the maid, "have you not made an attack on *my honour*? Is all your pretended love come to this? To refuſe the *firſt* favour ſhe ever aſked, to her who has granted you the *laſt*. Was there ever ſuch ingratitude? O! I ſhall burſt with vexation.—Yes," continued ſhe, weeping, "if you do not immediately tell me the cauſe of your maſter's miſery, you will render me ten thouſand times more miſerable than he."

There was no reſiſting ſuch a rational and pathetic remonſtrance. The valet unfolded the whole myſtery. "His poor maſter was deſperately and hopeleſsly in love with her miſtreſs; for knowing that ſhe was in ſome meaſure engaged to a friend of his own, he was a man of ſuch delicate honour that he would pine away his very ſoul in ſecret, rather than interfere with a friend; that he ate little or no food, never ſlept a wink, ſighed from morning to night; and as for my own part," continued the valet, "how ſhall I be able to ſupport the loſs of ſuch a generous

rous maſter! for he is the moſt liberal of men; one who thinks he never can ſufficiently recompence thoſe who do him even the ſmalleſt ſervice."

The maid expreſſed her admiration at the account he gave of his maſter, particularly at his neither eating nor ſleeping; ſhe likewiſe approved very much of his ſighing night and day for love. She knew that ſuch things were common formerly, for in the courſe of her ſtudies ſhe had read of them in books. "But I fear," ſaid ſhe, "they are not much the faſhion among lovers of the preſent age. Yet I muſt confeſs," continued ſhe, "that your maſter is to blame for not acquainting my miſtreſs with his paſſion."

"He never will," replied the valet; "nothing will ever prevail on him to come in competition with his friend; he will rather pine away his very ſoul in ſecret."

"He is very much to blame," ſaid the maid; "for allow me to put a caſe which has this moment come into my head.—If ſo be that many men were to act in the

ſame

ſame manner, it would be a great hardſhip on the fair ſex; for many of them might accept a man who was not very agreeable to them, while others, whom they would have preferred, are pining away their ſouls in ſecret; for if they always pine in ſecret, how is a woman to know that they are pining at all? And a prudent woman," continued the maid, "will ſecure what ſhe can get, rather than run the riſk of getting nothing. It is therefore a clear caſe, that your maſter ſhould ſpeak out, and acquaint my miſtreſs with his love; and who knows," added ſhe, with a ſignificant nod to the valet, "what may happen, ſince your maſter is ſo generous a man."

"Generous!" cried the valet, "you can have no notion how generous he is; nobody ever did him a ſervice without being rewarded far beyond their expectations; but as for ſpeaking of his paſſion to your miſtreſs, it is what he never will do;—but no doubt it might be happy for both, that ſhe knew how much he loves her; for I confeſs, I tremble for his life; for

for rather than offer himſelf in competition with his friend, he will conceal the flame which conſumes him within his own breaſt."

"Jeſu Maria!" cried the maid, "conceal a flame within his breaſt!"

"Yes," continued the valet, "and ſigh his ſoul to the laſt puff unobſerved, like the dying flame in a dark lanthorn."

The maid burſt into tears at this affecting image; and after endeavouring to comfort her, he begged of her never to mention, to any of the human race, what he had told her,—but particularly not to her miſtreſs.

"I am ſure," replied the maid, "my miſtreſs would not deſerve to be numbered among the human race, if ſhe allowed ſo faithful a lover to expire in any ſuch manner."

"It would, indeed, be ten thouſand pities," ſaid the valet; "but you will never give a hint of what I have told you."

"I give a hint!" exclaimed the maid; "I will be cut into ten thouſand pieces firſt."

So

So ſaying, ſhe left him, and went with all poſſible ſpeed, and informed her miſtreſs, as the valet expected, of all he had ſaid; ending the narrative, which the lady liſtened to with evident ſatisfaction, by declaring, "That in the whole courſe of her life, ſhe had never heard of ſuch an ardent lover as Signor Zeluco."

"Ardent!" ſaid the miſtreſs; "what can you know of his ardour?"

"All that I know," replied the maid, "is, that he carries a flame in his breaſt; and is, beſides, a much handſomer man than Don Lopes."

"Thy head," ſaid the miſtreſs, "is always running on beauty—a prudent woman will think of more eſſential qualities."

"To be ſure, every prudent woman, like your ladyſhip, will do ſo," replied the maid; "but there is no judging for certain but by experience;—though in all appearance, Signor Zeluco has every eſſential quality as perfect as Don Lopes, and is a handſomer man into the bargain."

"Well,

"Well, but," ſaid the widow, ſmiling, "you would not have me go and court this handſome man of your's—would you?"

"No; aſſuredly," ſaid the maid; "I am always for ſupporting the dignity of our own ſex;—but I would have you to diſmiſs Don Lopes."

"What, before Signor Zeluco makes any propoſal?" cried the widow.

"Yes," ſaid the maid, "he will not dip an oar into the water till Don Lopes is diſmiſſed; this I know from good authority, that till you have given a final anſwer to Don Lopes, Signor Zeluco, rather than ſpeak, will expire."

"Expire!" cried the widow.

"Yes, indeed, madam, I am aſſured that Signor Zeluco is that kind of man."

"He is a very extraordinary kind of man indeed then," reſumed ſhe.

"That I am informed for certain he is," ſaid the maid; "for although he is languiſhing for love of your ladyſhip, yet rather

ther than open his mouth to you on the ſubject, he will certainly die."

"Die! nonſenſe," cried the widow.

"Yes, die," cried the maid, "and what is worſe, die in a dark lanthorn; at leaſt, I am told that is what he is in danger of."

CHAP. XII.

Heroic Love.

ALTHOUGH the widow affected to laugh at the maid, and deſpiſe her advice; yet ſhe had for ſome time been in expectation of a declaration of love from Zeluco; and having gathered from her maid's diſcourſe what the obſtacle was which prevented it, after conſulting her pillow, ſhe determined to overleap the barriers of female delicacy, and encourage him to a declaration of ſentiments which were highly agreeable to her.

Zeluco paid her a viſit at a time when ſhe was diſengaged from all other company, and ſhe had previouſly given orders that none ſhould be admitted while he remained with her.

When they met, the lady's countenance was dreſſed in ſmiles, and her whole manner announced the moſt encouraging frankneſs.

neſs. But on the brow of Zeluco, care and ſolicitude ſeemed to ſit brooding, and the ſighs of deſpondency burſt, as it were, involuntarily from his boſom.

They converſed for ſome time on indifferent ſubjects, but Zeluco diſplayed ſuch abſence of mind, and made ſo many pauſes of melancholy import, that the converſation was continually interrupted.

"I fear," ſaid the lady tenderly, "that ſome ſecret care preys upon your mind."

Zeluco, heaving as profound a ſigh as ever was hove on any theatre, threw up his eyes, and was ſilent.

"Why will you not diſcloſe the cauſe of your affliction?" ſaid the widow.

"Alas! madam, the cauſe of my miſery cannot be removed; my complaint is paſt remedy; why, therefore, ſhould I diſquiet others with ſorrows which are peculiar to myſelf; eſpecially, why ſhould I diſquiet thoſe whoſe happineſs it is my ardent wiſh, and would be my greateſt pride, to promote?"

"I know not who have the honour to be of that number," ſaid the widow with diffidence.

"My moſt fervent deſire, madam, would be to promote the happineſs of ——" here he heſitated, and ſeemed in a ſtate of trembling confuſion.

"The happineſs of whom?" cried the impatient widow.

"Alas! madam, do not inſiſt upon my diſcloſing ſentiments which I have ſo long ſtriven to ſuppreſs, and ſtill wiſh to conceal; ſentiments condemned by the voice of friendſhip, though inſpired by the pureſt love; ſentiments which, if known, might render me odious and criminal in your eyes."

"I am convinced you labour under a miſtake, Sir," ſaid the widow; "pray tell me therefore whoſe happineſs it is that you wiſh ſo earneſtly to promote."

"The happineſs of the moſt deſerving and moſt amiable of her ſex," cried Zeluco, fixing his eyes ardently on the widow;—"but this bleſſing never will be in my power."

"If

"If I am the perſon you allude to," ſaid the lady, throwing her eyes modeſtly on the ground, and bluſhing with all her might, "I muſt acknowledge that it is in *your* power more than in that of any man alive."

There was no reſiſting a hint ſo directly favourable as this. "Angels and ſaints of heaven," cried Zeluco, "am I awake, or am I deluded by a dream of felicity!"—— And ſo he poured out a rhapſody extremely inſipid in itſelf, but mightily reliſhed by the hearer. This was followed by a long converſation, in which the lady removed all the ſcruples of Zeluco, by aſſuring him of what ſhe was convinced was not ſtrictly true, that ſhe never had any intention of giving her hand to Don Lopes; and that although he, Zeluco, were entirely out of the queſtion, ſhe never would: that the gentleman was much miſtaken if he had entertained any ſuch hopes; and ſhe would ſeize the firſt opportunity that offered to inform him of this.—Zeluco begged that if ſhe was reſolved on that meaſure, that ſhe would execute it in the leaſt offenſive man-

ner poſſible: an advice which ſhe promiſed to follow.

In the next converſation which Don Lopes had with the widow, while, inſpired by the moſt flattering hopes, he began to urge his ſuit, and was endeavouring to remove thoſe objections which the lady had formerly ſtated againſt a woman's engaging in a ſecond marriage; an expreſſion fell from her which did not ſo much imply a reluctance to marriage as to chuſing him for her huſband. On his appearing ſurpriſed, and humbly requiring an explanation; the lady acknowledged, that the prejudice ſhe had ſo ſtrongly entertained againſt a ſecond marriage was now effaced by his very judicious arguments, many of which would never have occurred to her uninſtructed judgment, and ſhe ſhould always retain a grateful ſenſe of the pains he had taken to free her mind from an error ſo prejudicial to ſociety. But, at the ſame time, after a thouſand apologies, ſhe confeſſed, that, although ſhe was convinced of the propriety of her marriage, yet ſhe had not

not that degree of love for him which, in her opinion, was neceſſary to conſtitute happineſs in the marriage ſtate. That ſhe ſhould be extremely glad to remain on a footing of friendſhip with him (for ſhe really had a high eſteem for his character), but unfortunately not that *paſſionate ardour of love*, which alone could enſure felicity to a married couple; and therefore, on his own account, as well as her's, ſhe begged he would deſiſt from his ſuit.

The gentleman thanked her for her eſteem, and the obliging attention ſhe diſplayed for his felicity; hinted, that if ſhe had been equally explicit ſooner, it would have ſaved both herſelf and him ſome trouble, and begged to know whether he might be permitted to aſk, if the ſentiments ſhe expreſſed proceeded entirely from her indifference to *him*, or were in part owing to a *paſſionate ardour of love* for ſome other man.

After throwing her eyes on the ground, and covering her face with her handkerchief, the lady declared, that, contrary to her wiſhes, and without any deſign on his

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part, ſhe felt ſuch an attachment to his friend Zeluco, as rendered it highly improper for her to give her hand to another; particularly, ſhe was incapable of ſuch injuſtice to a perſon for whom ſhe had ſo high a regard as the gentleman to whom ſhe then ſpoke.

"You are certain that Zeluco is unacquainted with the preference which you give him?" ſaid the gentleman.

"I know not what he may ſuſpect," anſwered the bluſhing widow; "I only know that he never explained himſelf to me, nor, I am convinced, ever will, whatever his ſentiments may be, while it is believed that you continue your purſuit."

"My purſuit terminates here, madam; and I will, myſelf, inform Zeluco of his good fortune," continued the generous Spaniard; "ſince I cannot have the happineſs I expected myſelf, I will not ſtand in the way of another whom you prefer, and who very poſſibly may render you happier than I could."

This well-meaning and candid man acquainted Zeluco, according to his declaration, of the widow's ſentiments. The conſummate hypocrite expreſſed great ſurpriſe and concern at the intelligence, and affected infinite reluctance, in accepting of a piece of good fortune, however deſirable in itſelf, which had befallen him, at the expence of ſo dear a friend. All this affectation and mummery was in due time overcome, and Zeluco's nuptials with the widow were celebrated in form.

CHAP. XIII.

On ne trouve guère d'ingrats, tant qu'on eſt en état de faire du bien. ROCHEFOUCAULT.

AS the gentleman who ſo generouſly had quitted his claim had never, during his courtſhip, ſhewn any anxiety on the ſubject of ſettlements, Zeluco alſo waved all diſcuſſion of that kind, that he might appear equally diſintereſted. He knew, however, that by the lady's will, as it then ſtood, her fortune, if ſhe ſhould have no children, would devolve to one of her relations. This deſtination he thought he ſhould prevail upon her at his leiſure to alter, and as the lady was near fifty years of age, and never had a child by her former huſband, or, as far as he knew, by any other perſon, Zeluco thought there was little danger of his being ſhoved out of her fortune, either by her relations, or his own offspring. The lady herſelf, indeed, did not

not look upon her having a pretty numerous poſterity in ſuch a deſperate light as it appeared to others; for in her lateſt ſettlement, which was not of an old date, ſhe had ſpecified the proviſion of her ſecond begotten ſon or daughter, her third, her fourth, and ſo on, and with the moſt laudable and truly maternal ſolicitude ſhe had amply provided for a dozen of her expected progeny.

Zeluco appeared equally obſequious after marriage as before, making every effort in his power to engroſs and ſecure the affections of his ſpouſe, who on her part became every day more doatingly fond of him; and at length, all the regard, kindneſs, and friendſhip, ſhe formerly felt for other relations and connections, were totally effaced, and the whole affection of her heart centered in her beloved huſband.

One idea however intruded into her mind, and diſturbed her happineſs; this aroſe from her huſband's profeſſion, which ſhe dreaded might occaſion a ſeparation between them, and expoſe him to the hard-

ſhips and dangers of war. She often conjured him therefore, with all the eloquence of love, to abandon a ſituation which kept her in perpetual alarm, and embittered the ſweeteſt enjoyments of her life.

Zeluco diſliked the profeſſion as much as his lady, and was fully reſolved to quit it, but he was equally reſolved to make his yielding to her entreaties ſubſervient to another plan which now occupied his thoughts.

He always replied to her endearing ſolicitations on that head with every appearance of grateful acknowledgment, expreſſing at the ſame time the greateſt reluctance to give up a profeſſion of which he was paſſionately fond, and in which he expected to obtain glory and preferment.

This affecting conteſt was often renewed; on one occaſion, Zeluco, exaggerating the advantages he might derive from continuing in the ſervice, ſaid, that if he ſhould be as fortunate as ſome other officers, he might be enabled one day to redeem the eſtate of his anceſtors, and appear with ſplendour and reputation in his native country.

country. He probably expected, that in conſequence of this hint ſhe would have put it in his power immediately, by making over her fortune to him;—but whether from not fully comprehending the import of what he ſaid, or from ſome remains of prudence, ſhe made no direct anſwer; and her fears reſpecting her huſband's profeſſion ſeemed to relapſe into a ſlumber, when they were ſuddenly rouſed by her receiving an anonymous letter from one who pretended great anxiety for her happineſs, at the ſame time informing her, that war would very ſoon be declared; that her huſband's regiment was deſtined for immediate ſervice, in a ſecret expedition, of which he himſelf had already received intimation, though out of tenderneſs he concealed it from her.

This alarming news at once awakened her apprehenſions and lulled her prudence. She tenderly expoſtulated with her huſband for concealing intelligence of ſuch infinite importance to her peace of mind. Without abſolutely admitting the truth of her information, he uſed it as a freſh argument againſt

againſt the propriety of his quitting the army. "If he had heſitated, even in the time of peace, how could he in honour agree to it on the eve of a war?" This convinced her of the truth of the intelligence.

"But you have not heard," cried the half-diſtracted woman, "that war is yet declared?"

"With whatever certainty it may be expected, it aſſuredly is not actually declared," replied Zeluco; "if that were the caſe, even you, my deareſt love, could no longer wiſh that I ſhould leave the army; nor could I after that allow of any intreaty on the ſubject."

"Well, thank heaven, it is not yet too late," cried ſhe; and immediately leaving Zeluco, ſhe ordered an irrevocable deed to be made out, by which her whole fortune, real and perſonal, was transferred to her huſband. This ſhe ſhewed him, telling him at the ſame time, that ſhe would deliver it into his poſſeſſion the moment that he reſigned his commiſſion. After the higheſt

higheſt expreſſion of admiration, at what he termed her generoſity of ſoul, and ſome very heroic ſentiments denoting the reluctance with which he had ſacrificed the hopes of military glory, he concluded, by repeating a line from a Spaniſh poet, equivalent to this from Pope's Eloiſa:

Fame, wealth, and honour, what are ye to love?

This ſcrap of poetry, though not very applicable on ſuch an occaſion, was heard with rapture, and conſidered by the enamoured lady as exceedingly in point.

Having obtained liberty to reſign, he quitted the army, to the great joy of his lady, and of the regiment to which he belonged.

CHAP. XIV.

Proprium humani ingenii eſt, odiſſe quem læſeris.
TACIT.

THE heroic mark of love above mentioned was the laſt that Zeluco was ſolicitous of receiving from his lady; for he ſeemed ever after very willing to diſpenſe with all indications of her paſſion, and his expreſſions of affection towards her diminiſhed in their energy from this period. She, at firſt with gentleneſs, and afterwards with a mixture of acrimony, remonſtrated with him on this alteration. But it has been obſerved, that complaints and remonſtrances ſeldom prove reſtoratives to a languid love. In the beſt and mildeſt diſpoſitions they do no good, in acrimonious diſpoſitions they exaſperate the diſeaſe.

Zeluco bore the murmurings of his wife from the beginning with but an ill-diſſembled patience, became more and more moroſe

roſe and ſulky as they were continued, and his behaviour terminated in avowed contempt and open abuſe.

The unhappy woman finding herſelf thus neglected, inſulted, and deſpiſed by the perſon on whom ſhe had fixed her affections and beſtowed her whole fortune, gradually ſunk into deſpondency, and after enduring all the bitterneſs of ſelf-reproach, ſhe died at the end of two years.

Diſappointment and diſquietude had attended Zeluco through the whole of his life; notwithſtanding the great acquiſition of fortune he derived from his marriage, even his matrimonial ſtate had been embittered with continual chagrin. This was the natural effect of his own vicious conduct; yet by a partiality of ſelf-deceit, which is very common, he always imputed his miſſing of happineſs to other cauſes: few people blame themſelves, while it is in the power of ſelf-love to twiſt the charge againſt others. All the diſcontent and fretfulneſs which Zeluco experienced during the lifetime of his wife, he thought originated

nated in the ill-humour and bad temper of that unhappy woman.

When he was freed therefore from what he conſidered as the only obſtruction to his happineſs, he expected that what he had hitherto purſued without attaining was at laſt within his reach.

But to render his felicity more certain and permanent, he thought it neceſſary to bring his eſtate to the higheſt pitch of improvement; after which he propoſed to return to Europe, and there in ſplendour and magnificence enjoy every pleaſure that his heart could deſire.

In the proſecution of this plan he laboured with ſuch aſſiduity and impatience as kept himſelf in everlaſting fretfulneſs, and proved fatal to ſeveral of his ſlaves, ſome of whom expired under the exertions he forced them to make, and others under the puniſhments he inflicted for the ſmalleſt remiſſneſs or neglect.

Zeluco was now in that ſituation in which the underſtanding cannot improve, and the diſpoſition is the moſt likely to degenerate; avoiding

avoiding and being avoided by every perſon of a liberal and independent mind; living almoſt conſtantly on his own eſtate, with a ſet of people over whom he had unlimited power; ſeeing no perſon whoſe character he much reſpected, or whoſe cenſure he ſo much dreaded as to put him on his guard againſt the overflowings of paſſion, or make him check the impulſes of caprice, of courſe he became every day more unreaſonable, paſſionate, and cruel; and at length was unable to hear with patience the moſt candid and rational remonſtrance, flying into violent fits of rage on the moſt trivial occaſions; and when his domeſtics had the good fortune to execute his orders with ſuch preciſion and rapidity as left him not the leaſt pretence for blame, he then turned his rancour on the climate and ſoil, the viciſſitudes of the weather, burſting into ridiculous fits of paſſion at the commoneſt and moſt inevitable occurrences.

The daily habit which this odious man thus acquired of tormenting himſelf, would have afforded ſatisfaction to all who were

witneſſes to it, had it not been accompanied with the diabolical propenſity to haraſs and torment all thoſe unfortunate creatures whom Providence, for reaſons we cannot penetrate, ſubjected to his power.

When a man of a good diſpoſition is of a peeviſh, fretful, and capricious temper, which unfortunately is ſometimes the caſe, the uneaſineſs which he needleſsly gives himſelf is lamented by thoſe who are acquainted with his entire character. But when a villain is the ſlave of caprice, and of courſe a ſelf-tormentor, his miſery affords ſatisfaction and amuſement to all who know him. And although they durſt not diſplay it openly, yet it undoubtedly gave ſecret ſatisfaction to every one of this wretched man's ſlaves, to be witneſſes to the diſquietude and miſery of their perſecutor.

Zeluco having been repreſented as avaricious as well as cruel, it may be ſaid that the firſt of thoſe diſpoſitions would prove a reſtraint upon the laſt; and that the ſuggeſtions of ſelf-intereſt would prevent his puſhing

puſhing cruelty the length of endangering the lives of his ſlaves.

It is a common argument againſt the neceſſity of new laws for the protection of ſlaves, that they need no protection from a juſt and humane maſter, becauſe he will never injure them; nor from a maſter of an oppoſite character, becauſe his own intereſt will be their protection: but let it be remembered, that men who are not naturally compaſſionate, who are devoid of religious impreſſions, and in the habit of giving vent to every guſt of ill-humour, are apt, in the violence of rage, to become deaf to the voice of common ſenſe and intereſt, as well as of juſtice and mercy. An unfortunate gameſter throws the cards into the fire, and regrets that they have not feeling; a choleric man breaks and deſtroys the furniture of his houſe, however valuable; and how often do we ſee men in an abſurd rage abuſe their moſt ſerviceable cattle? But a thouſand cauſes, which muſt occur to every one, expoſe *human creatures* to the vindictive rage of ill-tempered proprietors

in a much greater degree than inanimate things or the brute creation ever can be. And we find in fact, that cruel and paſſionate maſters, however intereſted in other reſpects, do gratify their ill-humour againſt their moſt valuable ſlaves at the expence of their intereſt.

It will be alleged, that in all the Chriſtian colonies the ſlaves are ſo far protected from the injuſtice of their maſter, that none of them can be condemned capitally, but after trial in a court of juſtice. Long experience has made it clear, however, that the proprietors of land in thoſe colonies, Chriſtians as they are, ſhew little diſpoſition to liſten to the complaints of ſlaves, or interfere with each other reſpecting the manner in which ſlaves are treated; and when it is whiſpered about, that a ſlave has expired under the laſh, or has died in conſequence of the arbitrary puniſhment of his maſter, people in general are not fond of the trouble of collecting proofs, or appearing in the character of accuſers; particularly when the delinquent is a white man, of intereſt

perhaps in the colony, and the ſufferer a black ſlave. Beſides, there may in many inſtances be a full conviction of the crime, and yet the criminal may not be deemed within the graſp of thoſe vague laws which the policy of Europe has thought ſufficient for the protection of ſlaves from the cruelty of their maſters. The law may direct, that a maſter ſhall not order more than a limited number of ſtripes to be inflicted for any fault that his ſlave commits. But if the law requires no proof of the fault, except the allegation of the maſter, what ſecurity has the ſlave that he ſhall not be puniſhed unjuſtly, or that his maſter ſhall not, as often as he pleaſes, repeat the puniſhment at ſuch intervals as keep him out of the reach of the law? It muſt be owned that the ſlave has no ſecurity from ſuch abuſes, which is tantamount to putting it in the maſter's power to torture his ſlaves to death with impunity. Such laws are no ſafe-guard, but rather a mockery of the unhappy race of men they pretend to protect.

This unlimited power, which is left in the hands of the maſters, has a bad effect both on the ſlave and the maſter. It tends at once to render the firſt more wretched, and the ſecond more wicked. How many men have, for a great part of their lives, ſupported the character of well-diſpoſed good-natured people; and on going from Europe to the Weſt Indies, and becoming proprietors of ſlaves, have gradually grown ill-tempered, capricious, haughty, and cruel? Even Zeluco, though of a capricious, violent, and ſelfiſh diſpoſition, was not naturally cruel; this laſt grew upon him in conſequence of unlimited power. His ſeverity to the ſoldiers aroſe from a deſire of gaining the favour of the commander, by rendering the men under his immediate command more expert than others. In puſhing this point he diſregarded, indeed, the ſufferings of the men; becauſe his exceſſive ſelfiſhneſs engroſſed all his feelings, and left him quite indifferent to the feelings of others; he ſtill was not poſitively cruel. Uninfluenced by paſſion or rage, he had no

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ſatisfaction in giving pain; he was only unconcerned whether they ſuffered or not. And afterwards, when he became the abſolute maſter of a great number of unfortunate creatures, whom he conſidered as his property, he thought he had a right to make the moſt of them. And he was informed by thoſe who have heads for ſuch a calculation, and hearts to act in conſequence of it, that to force ſlaves to their utmoſt exertions, and purchaſe new ones as the old expire, is, upon the whole, more œconomical than to treat them with a certain degree of gentleneſs, and oblige them to no more labour than is proportioned to their ſtrength, although, by this means, the purchaſes would be leſs frequent. A perſon who paſſed for a very ſenſible man, who formerly kept an inn on one of the great poſting roads in England, and was at this time a conſiderable proprietor of land in one of the Weſt-India iſlands, had aſſured him, that he had found this to hold with regard to poſt horſes; and the argument was equally juſt when applied to ſlaves.

Zeluco therefore had originally no direct intention of injuring his ſlaves; his view was ſimply to improve his eſtates to the utmoſt; but in the execution of this plan, as *their* exertions did not keep pace with *his* impatience, he found it neceſſary to quicken them by an unremitting uſe of the whip. This produced diſcontent, murmurs, ſulkineſs, ſometimes upbraidings, on their parts; rage, threats, and every kind of abuſe, on his: he ſaw hatred in all their looks, he preſumed revenge in all their hearts; he became more and more ſevere, and treated them as he imagined they wiſhed to treat him, and as he was conſcious he deſerved to be treated by them; at length he arrived at that ſhocking point of depravity, to have a gratification in puniſhing, independent of any idea of utility or advantage to himſelf.

This, unfortunately for a large proportion of mankind, is often the progreſs of unlimited power, and the effect which it too frequently produces on the human character.

If the reign of many European proprietors of eſtates in the Weſt Indies were faithfully recorded, it is much to be feared, that the capricious cruelties which diſgrace thoſe of Caligula and Nero would not ſeem ſo incredible as they now do. And perhaps no memoirs could be more affecting to a candid and humane mind, than thoſe of many negroes, from the time of their being brought from the coaſt of Guinea, till their death in the Weſt Indies. The fate of one of Zeluco's ſlaves, called Hanno, being connected with our purpoſe, may, without impropriety, be mentioned here.

CHAP. XV.

——Merciful Heaven!
Thou rather, with thy ſharp and ſulphurous bolt,
Split'ſt the unwedgable and gnarled oak,
Than the ſoft myrtle! O, but man! proud man!
Dreſt in a little brief authority;
Moſt ignorant of what is moſt aſſured,
His glaſſy eſſence—like an angry ape,
Plays ſuch fantaſtick tricks before high Heaven,
As makes the angels weep.——

SHAKESPEARE.

HANNO, the ſlave mentioned at the end of the foregoing chapter, allowed ſymptoms of compaſſion, perhaps of indignation, to eſcape from him, on hearing one of his brother ſlaves ordered to be puniſhed unjuſtly. Zeluco having obſerved this, ſwore that Hanno ſhould be the executioner, otherwiſe he would order him to be puniſhed in his ſtead.

Hanno ſaid, he might do as he pleaſed; but as for himſelf he never had been accuſtomed to that office, and he would not

begin by exerciſing it on his friend. Zeluco, in a tranſport of rage, ordered him to be laſhed ſeverely, and renewed the puniſhment at *legal* intervals ſo often, that the poor man was thrown into a languiſhing diſeaſe; which confined him conſtantly to his bed.

Hanno had been a favourite ſervant of his lady's before her marriage with Zeluco; he was known to people of all ranks on the iſland, and eſteemed by all who knew him. The Iriſh ſoldier who had carried the commanding officer from the field, as was related above, was taken into that gentleman's ſervice ſome time after, and remained conſtantly in his family from that time; this ſoldier had long been acquainted with Hanno, and had a particular eſteem for him. As ſoon as he heard of his dangerous ſituation, he haſtened to ſee him, carried him wine and other refreſhments, and continued to viſit and comfort him during his languiſhing illneſs. Perceiving at laſt that there was no hope of his recovery, he thought the laſt and beſt good office he could do

him

him was to carry a prieſt to give him abſolution and extreme unction.

As they went together, "I ſhould be very ſorry, father," ſaid the ſoldier, "if this poor fellow miſſed going to heaven; for, by Jeſus, I do not believe there is a worthier ſoul there, be the other who he pleaſes."

"He is a black," ſaid the prieſt, who was of the order of St. Francis.

"His ſoul is whiter than a ſkinned potatoe," ſaid the ſoldier.

"Do you know whether he believes in all the tenets of our holy faith?" ſaid the prieſt.

"He is a man who was always ready to do as he would be done by," replied the ſoldier.

"That is ſomething," ſaid the capuchin, "but not the moſt eſſential. Are you certain that he is a Chriſtian?"

"O, I'll be damned if he is not as pretty a Chriſtian as your heart can deſire," ſaid the ſoldier; "and I'll give you a proof that will rejoice your ſoul to hear.—A ſoldier of our regiment was ſeized with the cramp

cramp in his leg when he was bathing; ſo he halloed for aſſiſtance, and then went plump to the bottom like a ſtone. Thoſe who were near him, Chriſtians and all, ſwum away as faſt as their legs could carry them, for they were afraid of his catching hold of them. But honeſt Hanno puſhed directly to the place where the ſoldier had ſunk, dived after him, and, without more ado, or ſo much as ſaying by your leave, ſeized him by the hair of the head, and hauled him aſhore; where, after a little rubbing and rolling, he was quite recovered, and is alive and merry at this bleſſed moment. Now, my dear father, I think this was behaving like a good Chriſtian, and what is much more, like a brave Iriſhman too."

"Has he been properly inſtructed in all the doctrines of the catholic church?" ſaid the prieſt.

"That he has," replied the ſoldier; "for I was after inſtructing him yeſterday myſelf; and as you had told me very often, that believing was the great point, I preſſed that

that home. "By Jeſus," ſays I, "Hanno, it does not ſignify making wry faces, but you muſt believe, my dear Honny, as faſt as ever you can, for you have no time to loſe;—and, poor fellow, he entreated me to ſay no more about it, and he would believe whatever I pleaſed."

This ſatisfied the father; when they arrived at the dying man's cabin, "Now, my dear fellow," ſaid the ſoldier, "I have brought a holy man to give you abſolution for your ſins, and to ſhew your ſoul the road to heaven; take this glaſs of wine to comfort you, for it is a helliſh long journey."

They raiſed poor Hanno, and he ſwallowed the wine with difficulty.

"Be not diſmayed, my honeſt lad," continued the ſoldier, "for although it is a long march to heaven, you will be ſure of glorious quarters when you get there. I cannot tell you exactly how people paſs their time indeed; but by all accounts there is no very hard duty, unleſs it is that you will be obliged to ſing pſalms and hymns pretty

pretty conſtantly; that to be ſure you muſt bear with: but then the devil a ſcoundrel who delights in tormenting his fellow-creatures will be allowed to thruſt his noſe into that ſweet plantation; and ſo, my dear Hanno, God bleſs you; all your ſufferings are now pretty well over, and I am convinced you will be as happy as the day is long, in the other world, all the reſt of your life."

The prieſt then began to perform his office;—Hanno heard him in ſilence,—he ſeemed unable to ſpeak.

"You ſee, my good father," ſaid the ſoldier, "he believes in all you ſay. You may now, without any further delay, give him abſolution and extreme unction, and every thing needful to ſecure him a ſnug birth in paradiſe."

"You are fully convinced, friend," ſaid the prieſt, addreſſing the dying man in a ſolemn manner, "that it is only by a firm belief in all the tenets of the holy catholic church, that——" "God love your ſoul, my dear father," interrupted the ſoldier, "give him

him abſolution in the firſt place, and convince him afterwards; for, upon my conſcience, if you bother him much longer, the poor creature's ſoul will ſlip through your fingers."

The prieſt, who was a good-natured man, did as the ſoldier requeſted.

"Now," ſaid the ſoldier, when the ceremony was over, "now, my honeſt fellow, you may bid the devil kiſs your b—de, for you are as ſure of heaven as your maſter is of hell; where, as this reverend father will aſſure you, he muſt ſuffer to all eternity."

"I hope he will not ſuffer ſo long," ſaid Hanno, in a faint voice; and ſpeaking for the firſt time ſince the arrival of the prieſt.

"Have a care of what you ſay, friend," ſaid the prieſt, in a ſevere tone of voice: "you muſt not doubt of the eternity of hell torments.—If your maſter goes once there, he muſt remain for ever."

"Then I'll be bound for him," ſaid the ſoldier, "he is ſure enough of going there."

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"But I hope in God he will not remain for ever," ſaid Hanno—and expired.

"That was not ſpoken like a true believer," ſaid the prieſt; "if I had thought that he harboured any doubts on ſuch an eſſential article, I ſhould not have given him abſolution."

"It is lucky then that the poor fellow made his eſcape to heaven before you knew any thing of the matter," ſaid the ſoldier.

As the ſoldier returned home from Hanno's cabbin, he met Zeluco, who, knowing where he had been, ſaid to him, "How is the d—d ſcoundrel now?"

"The d—d ſcoundrel is in better health than all who know him could wiſh," replied the ſoldier.

"Why, they told me he was dying," ſaid Zeluco.

"If you mean poor Hanno, he is already dead, and on his way to heaven;" ſaid the ſoldier; "but as for the ſcoundrel who murdered him, he'll be d—d before he get there."

CHAP. XVI.

The Portugueſe.

SOMETIME after this an occurrence took place which contributed more to render Zeluco leſs cruel to his ſlaves, than all the occaſional attacks of compunction he felt for the death of Hanno, or than all the laws exiſting for the protection of Negro ſlaves.

A rich Portugueſe merchant, who had been ſettled for ſeveral years in the town of Havannah, had lately purchaſed an eſtate contiguous to that of Zeluco, who diſplayed a great inclination to cultivate his acquaintance by every kind of polite attention.

He frequently viſited this merchant at his houſe in town, and offered him every kind of accommodation which his eſtate afforded, while the Portugueſe was re-

paring a houſe on his new purchaſe for the reception of his family.

This very obliging behaviour of Zeluco ſeemed extraordinary to all thoſe who knew him, and did not know that the merchant had a very handſome wife, who was fond of admiration, and not entirely free from coquetry.

Zeluco was much ſtruck with her beauty, and uſed all his art to ſeduce her. She, on her part, although not entirely inſenſible to the charms of his face and perſon, was ſtill more pleaſed with the eclat of having a man of his rank and fortune among the number of her admirers, and probably had no idea of ever making any other uſe of him. This lady was one of that claſs of women, who, being kept out of the way of temptation, and not vigorouſly attacked, will preſerve the citadel of their virtue inviolate through life. She was apt, however, through vanity, to expoſe ſome of the outworks a little too much, which invited the attacks of the enemy; and although ſhe had no ſerious intention of ever

formally ſurrendering the fort, ſhe might poſſibly, through inattention, have allowed it to be ſurpriſed by a *coup de main.*

This lady was allured into an epiſtolary correſpondence with Zeluco; at firſt on the moſt trifling ſubjects, and with the knowledge of her huſband, to whom ſhe ſhewed the billets; by degrees, however, it happened that ſhe received ſome which ſhe thought it unneceſſary to communicate.

When the Portugueſe brought his family to the houſe which he had repaired for their reception, Zeluco's intercourſe with them was more frequent; and he often walked with the huſband and wife in a ſequeſtered field ſituated between his own houſe and that of her huſband.

With ſome difficulty Zeluco at length prevailed on her to promiſe to meet him at this place towards the cloſe of an evening, when he knew that her huſband was engaged on buſineſs, which would neceſſarily detain him very late at the houſe of a gentleman who lived at a conſiderable diſtance.

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From the time that Zeluco's correſpondence with the lady became of a nature that ſhe was rather ſhy of communicating, he always employed one particular ſlave, who, he imagined, was very cordially attached to him on account of a few indulgences which were granted to him previous to his being entruſted as an agent in this buſineſs.

In this conjecture, however, Zeluco was greatly miſtaken; thoſe ſlight favours had not eradicated from the man's mind that hatred and thirſt for revenge which his maſter's former treatment had planted there.

Having come to the knowledge of the intended interview, he actually went and communicated all he knew to the huſband, and returned rejoicing in the hope that his deteſted maſter would be aſſaſſinated that very night.

The lady, however, had accidentally ſeen this ſlave with her huſband, and remarked, that from the time the ſlave had ſpoken to him he was uncommonly thoughtful, moroſe, and agitated.

This led her to ſuſpect that her huſband was informed of the appointment, which ſhe herſelf had already begun to repent of, and to heſitate about keeping.

After maturely weighing every circumſtance, ſhe determined to reveal to her huſband what ſhe thought he knew already.

She approached him therefore with an air of ſincerity and contrition, ſaying, ſhe was about to acquaint him with ſomething which lay like a load upon her mind; that ſhe had without ſcruple indulged an acquaintance with Signor Zeluco on account of the friendſhip he expreſſed for her huſband, and his polite and obliging behaviour to herſelf; but that of late ſhe had been ſurpriſed at a change in his manner of addreſſing her, which had terminated in a declaration of love; that ſhe had been reſtrained from mentioning this to him ſooner, being unwilling to give him uneaſineſs, and in hopes that from the manner in which ſhe had received his declaration, he would not venture to renew it: but finding he perſiſted in his criminal aſſiduities, and had

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even gone the length of propoſing that ſhe ſhould meet him privately and unknown to her huſband, ſhe thought herſelf bound in duty to conceal this behaviour of Zeluco's no longer; but to inform her huſband of the whole.

Here ſhe made a full ſtop;—and the huſband perceiving that ſhe meant to add nothing further, ſaid,—"Have you then informed me of the whole?"

She took heaven and earth to witneſs that ſhe had.

"I did not hear you mention that you had promiſed to meet him," ſaid the huſband.

The lady having recovered from a ſhort embarraſſment which this obſervation occaſioned, replied, that ſhe had been ſo much ſhocked with the propoſal, and in ſuch confuſion, that ſhe could not now recollect every word of what ſhe had ſaid; but that ſhe had immediately left him; "and whatever," added ſhe, "has fallen from me, which he may conſtrue into a promiſe, I am conſcious that I never ſhould

have gone near the place: of the truth of this, the information I have juſt given you is a ſufficient proof; and if I have erred in concealing this matter ſo long, my error proceeded from a deſire of preventing miſchievous conſequences, and out of tenderneſs to you.

The eloquence and fair pretences of the wife at length lulled the ſuſpicions, and ſoothed the rage of her ſpouſe with reſpect to herſelf; but his rancour againſt Zeluco remained in full force; and he threw out ſome threats of determined revenge. The wife was alarmed at this; for, although ſhe was now reſolved never to renew the intrigue, yet being conſcious that ſhe was in ſome degree to blame herſelf, ſhe would willingly have prevented any miſchief from befalling Zeluco; with this view ſhe begged of her huſband to overlook and deſpiſe the vain attempt which had been made, and leave the man to be puniſhed by the mortification of diſappointment, and the thoughts of the ridiculous light in which he muſt be conſcious that he ſtood in the ſight of both.

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The huſband ſeemed to acquieſce in his wife's reaſoning, but was determined to ſatisfy his revenge, a plan for which had already occurred to him.

Having perſuaded his wife to go to bed earlier than uſual, he dreſſed himſelf in her clothes, and throwing a white mantle over his head and ſhoulders, he ſlipt ſecretly out of his houſe, and with vindictive impatience walked to the place of rendezvous, where Zeluco had been waiting ever ſince the appointed moment.

With reviving joy, and by the glimmering light of the ſtars, he perceived a perſon in female attire approaching; and never doubting but it was the object of his wiſhes, he ſprung forward with bounding velocity to meet her embrace; but at that inſtant his boiling blood was frozen on hearing the following words pronounced in an unnatural voice,—"The ſpirit of thy wife, ſhe who fell a victim to thy perfidious cruelty, ſends thee this." On which the Portugueſe plunged his ſtiletto into the breaſt of Zeluco, who immediately fell to the

ground. The blow was given with good-will, the weapon ruſhed to the hilt, and the huſband, convinced he had killed him, returned quietly to his own houſe, without his wife or any of the family having ſuſpected that he had gone abroad.

CHAP. XVII.

The Reward of Inhumanity.

ZELUCO lay for ſome time on the ground, before he could recollect his terrified and ſcattered ſenſes, and when he had in ſome degree recovered them, he was ſtill unable to account for what had happened; ſometimes he believed he had, in reality, ſeen the ghoſt of his deceaſed wife; and every circumſtance of his ungrateful and perfidious conduct to her ruſhing on his memory, at a moment when he thought himſelf on the point of entering into a ſtate of retribution, filled his mind with horror, and drove him to the brink of madneſs, from which perhaps he was ſaved by the quantity of blood he loſt as he lay on the ground.

After paſſing ſeveral hours in a ſtate of terror and remorſe, the day beginning to dawn, he felt himſelf, though in a very weak

weak condition, able to move; and at length, by the aid of a tree, at whoſe root he had fallen, he got upon his legs, and then attempted to move towards his own houſe, but ſoon, through faintneſs, ſunk again to the ground, where he lay a conſiderable time longer in anguiſh, and deſpairing of relief. At length he ſaw ſome of his own ſlaves going to their morning labour.

In a tone very different from that in which he had been accuſtomed to addreſs them, with whining humility he implored their ſuccour, and begged they would have the goodneſs to carry him home.

At the ſound of a human voice, expreſſive of diſtreſs, the ſlaves ſprung eagerly to give their aſſiſtance; but the inſtant they perceived it was their maſter, they ſtopped ſhort with looks of abhorrence, as if it had not been a man but a wounded ſerpent, which they ſaw writhing on the ground. Some turned aſide, willing to be thought not to have obſerved him; others looked as if they enjoyed his agony; none offered

him

him aſſiſtance; and it is not probable he would ever have reached his own houſe alive, had not one of his managers joined them. By his authority, he was at laſt carried thither, and the beſt medical and ſurgical aid was immediately ſent for. The wound, upon the firſt examination, was thought mortal, and the univerſal ſatiſfaction that this occaſioned, as ſoon as it circulated among this deteſted man's ſlaves, was very evident, in ſpite of all their endeavours to control their features and geſtures. After languiſhing many weeks, however, the ſymptoms at laſt became favourable. During all the time in which it was doubtful whether he was to die or to live, the mind of the patient himſelf was hardly more cruelly agitated between fear and hope, than that of every ſlave, male and female, that belonged to him. And when he was pronounced to be out of danger, ſo fully was he loaded with their hatred, that the news produced a ſhock like that of electricity over his whole family. A number of ſlaves who happened to be at work

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in the garden, under the window of Zeluco's bed-chamber, burſt into a loud and uncontrollable howl of ſorrow when his recovery was firſt announced to them.

The patient, alarmed at the ſound, aſked the phyſician, then ſitting by his bed-ſide, what it meant. The phyſician, who underſtood it no more than Zeluco, went to inquire, and having diſcovered the true ſource of the outcry, returned to the patient.

"What is the meaning of that howl?" ſaid Zeluco; "it ſeemed prompted by ſorrow."

"It proceeded from your ſlaves," anſwered the phyſician; "they are inquiring after your health."

"Well, what then?" cried Zeluco.

"Why then," anſwered the Doctor, "I ſuppoſe they muſt have been told, by *miſtake*, that you are worſe, and likely to die. I have frequently known ſlaves expreſs their grief in the ſame manner, when they were in danger of loſing a good and humane maſter."

The

The irony of this reply was wormwood to Zeluco; he fell into a gloomy fit of muſing, and made no farther inquiry; neither did he, during his illneſs, or after his recovery, give any ſatisfactory account of the manner in which he had received the wound. Whatever his opinion might be, his fears were diſſipated; and when he was able to weigh circumſtances, he abſtained from ſuggeſting any ſuſpicion againſt particular perſons, or from making any inveſtigation of the ſubject.

CHAP. XVIII.

Ye, who one bitter drop have drain'd
From ſlav'ry's cup, with horror ſtain'd;
Oh, let no fatal dregs be found,
But daſh her chalice to the ground.
HELEN MARIA WILLIAMS.

FOR a conſiderable time after Zeluco was out of danger from his wound, and even after he began to walk abroad, and reſume the management of his affairs, he appeared more penſive than formerly; and although his thoughts ſeemed of a gloomy nature, yet he did not burſt out into thoſe violent fits of rage that had been cuſtomary with him before that accident. But the impreſſion which it had made on his mind gradually diminiſhed, and the ſentiments of dread and remorſe, which influenced his conduct for a time, wearing quite away, his former diſpoſitions returned with his bodily health.

One

One day, as he was walking around his eſtate, with the phyſician already mentioned, who had called upon him on his return from viſiting a patient, Zeluco gave pretty ſtrong indications of a relapſe into his former cruelty. The phyſician, who was a man of ſenſe and humanity, checked him, and expreſſed ſentiments of compaſſion for the deplorable condition of the poor ſlaves.

"They are," ſaid Zeluco, "the moſt villanous race alive."

"They certainly are the moſt unfortunate," ſaid the phyſician.

"Let them perform their taſk as they ought," replied the other, "and they will not be unfortunate."

"Why, it is not a ſlight misfortune," ſaid the Doctor, "to have *ſuch* taſks to perform."

"They are in a better ſituation than when they were in their own country."

"That would be difficult to prove," ſaid the phyſician; "but were it certain, I ſhould think it a bad reaſon for treating

them ill *here*, merely becauſe they had been very ill treated *there*."

"Negro ſlaves in general, all over the Weſt Indies," ſaid Zeluco, "are in a better condition than the common people in moſt countries in Europe. I have heard this aſſerted a thouſand times."

"If it were ſo," ſaid the phyſician, "it would convey a dreadful idea of the condition of Europeans; but the thing is impoſſible, Signor."

"How impoſſible?" ſaid Zeluco.

"Becauſe, even if ſlaves were in general fed and clothed as well as you are yourſelf, yet while it is in the power of their maſter to impoſe what taſk he pleaſes, and puniſh their faults according to his humour, their condition muſt be infinitely worſe than that of the cottager, whom nobody can abuſe with impunity, and on whom the cheering ſpirit of liberty ſmiles as he reaps the fruit of his own induſtry."

"You have certainly," ſaid Zeluco, "borrowed that ſentiment from an Engliſhman; ſome of thoſe enthuſiaſtic fools who

who are pleaſed to bear the inſolence of mobs, and to ſacrifice many of the conveniencies of life to the empty ſhade of freedom. Yet I have heard ſome, even of *their* Weſt India proprietors, aſſert, that the negroes of thoſe iſlands were happier than the common labourers in England."

"There is nothing too abſurd for ſome men to aſſert," ſaid the phyſician, "when they imagine their intereſt is concerned, or when it tends to juſtify their conduct. And were a law to be propoſed now againſt the ſlave trade, or to render the condition of ſlaves more tolerable than it is at preſent, which is more likely to happen among the generous enthuſiaſts you mention than in any other country, it would perhaps be oppoſed by thoſe very proprietors; but would you impute ſuch oppoſition to tenderneſs to the ſlaves, and a humane wiſh to prevent their becoming as miſerable as the common labourers in England?"

"I am told, however," replied Zeluco, "that your Engliſh in general are a moſt lugubrious race, and that there is much

melancholy and diſcontent in their country with all their liberty."

"I am told," anſwered the phyſician, "that there is much froſt and cold in their country with all their ſunſhine, yet it has not been as yet clearly proved that the ſun is the cauſe of either."

"Well, but to return to the ſlaves," ſaid Zeluco; "I do not perfectly underſtand what is your drift. Are they not my property? Have I not therefore a right to oblige them to labour for my profit?"

"With regard to the right which any man has to make a property of other men, and force them to labour as ſlaves ſolely for his benefit, I ſuſpect it would be difficult for the greateſt caſuiſt that ever lived to make it out."

"Why ſo?" replied Zeluco; "I am aſſured that the ſlave trade is authoriſed by the Bible. You are too ſound a Chriſtian, my good Doctor, to controvert ſuch authority."

"Without conſidering whether thoſe who furniſhed you with that argument did

it with friendly or unfriendly intentions to the Bible, Signor, and without touching any controvertible point in the Scriptures, I will juſt obſerve, that charity, benevolence, and mercy to our fellow-creatures, are not only authoriſed, but in the plaineſt unequivocal terms repeatedly ordained, in thoſe writings. Let therefore the proprietors of ſlaves begin, by conforming their conduct to thoſe injunctions, and then they may be allowed to quote Scripture authority in ſupport of ſuch property.—*Bleſſed are the merciful, for they ſhall obtain mercy.—Whatſoever ye would that men ſhould do to you, do ye ſo to them.—Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt.*—Theſe are the words of the Author of Chriſtianity, whoſe whole life was a repreſentation by action of his own precepts. Let the proprietors of eſtates in America and the Weſt India iſlands conſider how far their treatment of the negroes is agreeable to his doctrine and conduct; and their time will be better employed than in perverting detached paſſages of the Bible, and endeavouring to preſs that which is proclaimed

peace on earth, and good-will to men, into the ſervice of cruelty and oppreſſion."

"After all this fine ſermon," ſaid Zeluco, "you do not pretend to aſſert, that negroes are originally on a footing with white people; you will allow, I hope, that they are an inferior race of men."

"I will allow," replied the Doctor, "that their hair is ſhort and ours is long, that their noſes are flat and ours are raiſed, and their ſkin is black and ours white; yet after all thoſe conceſſions, I ſtill have my doubts reſpecting our right to make them ſlaves."

"Well, Doctor," ſaid Zeluco, "if you are determined to diſpute our *right*, you muſt admit that we have the *power*, which is of much more importance."

"While I admit *that*, Signor, I moſt ſincerely wiſh it were otherwiſe exerciſed."

"How the devil would you have it exerciſed?"

"We ſhould, in my opinion, exerciſe it with more moderation and lenity than ſome of us do," ſaid the phyſician.

"Lenity,"

"Lenity," cried Zeluco, "to a parcel of raſcals, a gang of pilfering dogs, downright thieves! why, as often as they can, they ſteal the very proviſions intended for my own table!"

"You cannot be much ſurpriſed at that, Signor, when they are pinched with hunger."

"You would have them pampered with delicacies forſooth, and never puniſhed for any crime?"

"No, Sir, but I would certainly allow them a ſufficient quantity of wholeſome food; and perceiving that all my neighbours are liable to commit faults, and being conſcious of many failings in myſelf, I ſhould not expect that poor untutored ſlaves were to be exempted from them, nor would I be relentleſs or unforgiving when they were diſcovered."

"Po, poh—that is not the way to deal with negroes; nothing is to be made of them by lenity; they are the lazieſt dogs in the world; it is with the greateſt dif-

ficulty ſometimes that my manager can get them rouſed to their morning work."

"Conſider, Signor, how natural it is after hard labour to wiſh to prolong the intervals of reſt."

"Reſt!" cried Zeluco, angrily; "they will have reſt enough in their graves."

"Well, Signor," replied the phyſician, ſhocked at this brutal remark, "it would be fortunate for ſome people that they could promiſe themſelves the ſame."

"But, Doctor," ſaid Zeluco, taking no notice of the laſt obſervation, "can you really imagine that ſuch treatment as you ſeem to recommend, would render ſlaves of equal benefit to the proprietors of Weſt India eſtates?"

"Ay, Signor," replied the phyſician, "that is coming directly to the point, which a man of ſenſe would wiſh to inveſtigate, leaving all the foreign matter concerning *religion* and *humanity*, which embarraſs the argument, out of the queſtion."

"Well,

"Well, conſidering the buſineſs with a view to a man's intereſt or profit only; long obſervation on the conduct of others, with my own experience, which has been conſiderable, convinces me that the maſter who treats his ſlaves with humanity and well-directed kindneſs, reaps more benefit from their labour, than he who behaves in a contrary manner. There are many inſtances of ingratitude to be ſure, but it is not natural to the human heart: we naturally endear ourſelves to thoſe to whom we impart pleaſure, and men in general ſerve with more alacrity and perſeverance from love than fear. The inſtant that the eye of the manager is turned from the ſlave who ſerves from fear alone, his efforts relax; but the induſtry of him who ſerves from attachment, is continually prompted by the gratitude, and the regard for his maſter's intereſt, which he carries in his breaſt.

"Beſides, Signor, how infinitely more pleaſing is it to be conſidered as the diſtributor of happineſs, than the inflictor of pain?

pain? What man, who has it in his power to be loved as a benefactor, would chooſe to be deteſted as an executioner, and ſee ſorrow, terror, and abhorrence, in the countenances he daily beholds? Come, Signor," continued the phyſician, "having, during the courſe of your illneſs, given you many advices for which you have paid me, pray accept of one from me gratis; you will reap much ſatisfaction from it, and it may prevent your being expoſed to new dangers, ſimilar to that from which you have with ſuch difficulty eſcaped.—My advice is this: Alter entirely your conduct towards your ſlaves; ſcorn not thoſe who demand juſtice and mercy; treat them with much more indulgence, and ſometimes with kindneſs; for certainly that man is in a moſt miſerable as well as dangerous ſituation, who lives among thoſe who rejoice in his ſickneſs, howl with deſpair at his recovery, and whoſe only hope of tranquillity lies in their own death or in his."

The phyſician having made this remonſtrance, took his leave. Zeluco remained

muſing for a conſiderable time after he was gone; the reſult of his reflections was a determination to behave with more indulgence to his ſlaves, being alarmed by what was ſuggeſted, and convinced that ſuch conduct in future was highly expedient for his own perſonal ſecurity. Thoſe reſolutions were however very imperfectly kept. Indeed, Zeluco had already given ſo very bad an impreſſion of his character, that a much more thorough reformation muſt have been continued a long time before it could anſwer the purpoſe of recovering the good opinion of the public.

Perceiving, therefore, that all intimacy with him was rather avoided, he gave over every attempt of cultivating new acquaintance; and, as it frequently happens to thoſe who have deſervedly forfeited the public eſteem, he endeavoured to indemnify himſelf for the loſs of character and the want of reſpectable ſociety, by an unbounded indulgence in ſenſual pleaſure, and the company of a few dependants; to which he added, the contemplation of accumulating

cumulating wealth, which indeed was the only *mental* enjoyment he had, as well as the only cauſe of his remaining out of Europe; for, according to the cuſtom of money-makers, he had ſet his heart on a particular ſum, and was reſolved not to quit the ſuperintendence of his own affairs till he had acquired it, after which he propoſed to paſs the reſt of his life in uninterrupted enjoyment.

In this manner, therefore, Zeluco ſpent a few more miſerable years in the Weſt Indies; miſerable ſurely they muſt have been, for what bodily gratifications, what accumulation of riches, could prevent that man from being wretched, whom no one approached that could avoid it, whom no one ſerved but through fear, and who was conſcious of being the object of the hatred and execration of all who knew him?

Fatigued and jaded by a life of comfortleſs voluptuouſneſs, and finding a favourable opportunity of diſpoſing of an eſtate he had purchaſed to great advantage in the iſland of Hiſpaniola, as well as a conſi-

conſiderable part of his eſtate in Cuba, he granted a leaſe of the remainder, ſettled his affairs, remitted his money to Europe, and prepared to return to his native country, in expectation that his wealth would procure him there that happineſs which he found it unable to produce in the Weſt Indies. But before he finally left this part of the world, he reſolved to ſettle an account, which, in his own vengeful heart, he thought he juſtly owed to his neighbour, the Portugueſe merchant.

CHAP. XIX.

Perfidy and Revenge.

IN giving an account of Zeluco's adventure with the Portugueſe merchant, it was remarked, that he ſlipped out of his own houſe, and returned, unobſerved by his wife, or any other perſon. With like caution, he ever after abſtained from mentioning what had happened.

When it became publicly known that Zeluco had been ſtabbed, the Portugueſe expreſſed equal ſurpriſe, and rather more concern than other people, and was exceedingly attentive in ſending meſſages of enquiry about his health.

One of Zeluco's ſlaves having run away the ſame evening on which his maſter was ſtabbed, it was generally believed that this ſlave had done the deed; Zeluco himſelf encouraged that report, and for obvious reaſons

reaſons diſcouraged all purſuit or ſearch for the fugitive. He had no doubt, however, that the real perpetrator of the fact was the Portugueſe; and ſtrongly ſuſpected that the wife was an accomplice. On his recovery, however, he thanked his Portugueſe neighbour with the moſt ſatisfied air imaginable, for his obliging inquiries, and deſcanted with every appearance of conviction on the treachery and ingratitude of the fugitive ſlave who had ſo baſely attempted to murder him.

No man was ever more ready to forget a good office done to him than Zeluco, and none ever more tenaciouſly remembered an injury: theſe oppoſite turns of diſpoſition generally go together.

While Zeluco carefully concealed his ſuſpicions within his own breaſt, he determined to act as if theſe ſuſpicions amounted to certainty, and to be fully revenged of both the huſband and wife. He ſaw, however, that it behoved him to act with great circumſpection, and it was not eaſy to form what he conſidered as a ſuitable

able plan of revenge; for whatever concern the Portugueſe had ſeemed to take in the health of Zeluco, he did not carry his diſſimulation the length of renewing their intimacy; his wife likewiſe obſerved the utmoſt reſerve towards Zeluco, giving him no opportunity of demanding an explanation of what was paſt, or of renewing the intrigue.

She had not proved with child during the firſt two years of her marriage, but in the courſe of that in which her adventure with Zeluco took place ſhe bore a ſon. As the huſband had been uncommonly anxious to have children, his impatience on that head had made him almoſt deſpair of ever having any. His joy on the happy event was equal to his former uneaſineſs, and his fondneſs for his wife was redoubled by his ſatisfaction in being a father; while the augmented attention which he paid her, joined to the natural affection ſhe felt for her child, operated a favourable alteration in her character, and confirmed her virtuous reſolutions.

Zeluco

Zeculo underſtood, with redoubled wrath and malignity, that two people he mortally hated lived with mutual confidence and in the happieſt union; ſometimes he had the mortification of hearing them quoted as a ſtriking example of parental affection and conjugal felicity. He at length founded his ſcheme of revenge on a knowledge of theſe circumſtances, and reſolved to attack their happineſs in its ſource.

By a few preſents, and the intervention of his valet, he gained the maid of the Portugueſe, and without exactly explaining what his views were, he prevailed on her to be ſubſervient to them.

He was informed by the girl, that the nurſe ſometimes carried the child to a ſhady ſeat, at a ſmall diſtance from her maſter's houſe; Zeluco paſſed that way one day, when he knew of the Portugueſe and his lady being elſewhere; he expreſſed the greateſt joy at the ſight of the child, took it in his arms, and fondled it with every appearance of the tendereſt affection; he

earneſtly and repeatedly begged of the nurſe to be exceedingly careful of the ſweet infant, preſented her with a purſe of gold as a reward for her paſt care, and promiſed her another in due time, provided ſhe perſevered in her tenderneſs; he earneſtly entreated the woman not to mention what had paſſed to her maſter; and taking his leave with ſeeming reluctance, entreated her to return to the ſame place with the child, as often as ſhe ſhould know that her maſter was abſent, or engaged with company. He had ſeveral interviews of the ſame kind, in the ſame place, within the ſpace of a month.

Whatever reflections occurred to the nurſe on theſe ſecret viſits, and his extraordinary affection for the child, ſhe kept a prudent ſilence, and hoarded them carefully up within her breaſt, as a precious fund to be expended among her particular friends and goſſips on future occaſions.

Zeluco at length arranged matters ſo that the lady and her maid approached the place while he was careſſing the child; and

and as ſoon as he was ſatisfied that they obſerved him, he delivered the infant with precipitation into the nurſe's arms and retired.

The lady, greatly ſurpriſed at what ſhe had ſeen, queſtioned the nurſe, who, with ſome heſitation (as the maid was preſent), told her all that paſſed, without ſuppreſſing a circumſtance, except that of her having received the purſe.

The lady was more and more at a loſs what conſtruction to put on ſo ſtrange and unlooked-for an incident.—She aſked the nurſe, "Whether ſhe had ever mentioned this matter to her maſter?"

"No, never; I do aſſure your ladyſhip I never did," replied the nurſe with earneſtneſs.

"I do not know why you ſhould not," ſaid the miſtreſs, with affected unconcern; "as there ſeems ſomething a little extraordinary in this man's taking ſo much notice of the child, I think it would be proper that my huſband ſhould be informed of it."

"Lord, madam," ſaid the maid, who was inſtructed to prevent this, "if the nurſe were to inform my maſter of all thoſe who careſs and ſeem fond of the child, ſhe could do nothing elſe;—every mortal is ſtruck with his beauty, and Signor Zeluco, in admiring and careſſing him, does no more than others. To mention him in particular to my maſter would ſeem exceedingly odd." The miſtreſs ſeeming ſtill to balance whether it would not be her ſafeſt courſe to acquaint her huſband;—the maid continued, "I will refer it to the nurſe, if any body could ever look on the child without admiration."—The nurſe declared, that nobody ever could.—"Only look at him yourſelf, madam," continued the maid; "obſerve how like an angel he ſmiles. Can you be uneaſy, or think it extraordinary, that all the world ſhould admire and wiſh to careſs ſuch a delightful creature?"

The mother, whoſe eyes were fixed on the child during this harangue, thought, as ſhe gazed, that the incident which had given

given her uneaſineſs was leſs extraordinary than ſhe had at firſt imagined, and at length allowed herſelf to believe, that it was very natural for Zeluco, or any other perſon, to behave as he had done.

Let thoſe who are ready to accuſe this poor woman of exceſſive weakneſs, remember that ſhe was a mother, and that the infant, though far from being handſome, was her firſt born and only child.

Yet as ſhe is repreſented as not deficient in quickneſs of thought and clearneſs of underſtanding, ſhe may be thought to have acted inconſiſtently with this character, in attempting to conceal from her huſband what he was ſo likely to come to the knowledge of, from the babbling propenſity natural to nurſes and maids. If I am not miſtaken, however, the ſex in general are apt to ſhrink from preſent inconveniences, even when ſenſible that by encountering them they would obviate the riſk of future misfortunes. The lady was certain, that the knowledge of Zeluco's ſecret viſits to the child would throw her huſband into

immediate ill-humour, and awaken very diſagrecable reflections in his mind. She flattered herſelf, that he might never hear a word of the matter, and ſhe could not bear to diſturb the preſent calm to ſecure herſelf from a future ſtorm, which poſſibly might never occur. In behaving as ſhe did in this particular, ſhe will be kept in countenance by many who act on the ſame principles in matters of far greater importance; but ſhe ſeems to have been entirely forſaken by her natural ſagacity, when ſhe anxiouſly enjoined the nurſe and her own maid to conceal what had happened from her huſband. For it required but a ſuperficial glance of their diſpoſitions to perceive, that this was giving them an additional incitement to reveal it.

She was probably tempted to this inconſiderate ſtep, by the knowledge ſhe had, that Zeluco was ſoon to return to Europe; and ſhe loſt no time in perſuading her huſband to remove with his family to his houſe in town, that Zeluco might not be tempted to ſeek another interview; and ſhe reſolved

to

to keep herſelf and the child ſequeſtered from any chance of meeting him before his departure from the iſland.

Zeluco being informed of theſe circumſtances by the maid, who, on the pretence of ſome neceſſary arrangements, remained one day after the departure of her maſter and miſtreſs; he, in proſecution of his baſe ſcheme, gave her a letter, which he deſired her to place in ſuch a ſituation as to be obſerved by the former, and ſeem to have dropped from the latter. When the maid joined the family in town, ſhe executed theſe orders with but too much dexterity. While ſhe ſtood behind her miſtreſs, who was writing, the huſband entered the room a little abruptly, and told his wife that ſomebody wiſhed to ſpeak to her in the parlour. She immediately locked up her papers into a ſmall writing deſk, and withdrew.—As ſhe roſe, the maid took that opportunity of dropping the letter ſhe had received from Zeluco, beneath the ſeat her miſtreſs was quitting, and immediately followed her out of the room. The

huſband picked up the letter which was unſealed, rumpled, addreſſed to his wife, and conceived in the following terms:

"It is impoſſible for me, my deareſt ſoul, to expreſs the happineſs I have enjoyed in ſeeing and careſſing the ſweet pledge of our mutual love; I ſhall never forget your kind attention, in directing the nurſe to the ſpot where I had that delicious enjoyment. I muſt, however, acquieſce in the prudence of your determination, to perſuade your tyrant to move for ſome time to his houſe in town, where an interview may be arranged with leſs danger, and I ſhall wait with as much patience as I am able for that happy moment.

"*P. S.* I continue to diſguiſe my writing, and earneſtly recommend to you the ſame precaution."

The aſtoniſhment and rage of the Portugueſe on reading this may be eaſier imagined than deſcribed; ſeizing his wife's writing-deſk, which ſtood upon a table, he carried it into his own apartment, and there read over and over the fatal ſcroll which

which filled his heart with anguiſh. Notwithſtanding the diſguiſe of the writing he eaſily diſtinguiſhed it to be that of Zeluco, —which left him no doubt of his wife's infidelity. The firſt violence of his wrath and indignation might have proved fatal to her, had it not been damped and counteracted, in ſome meaſure, by the grief and dejection he felt, that the child he ſo dearly loved, and had been ſo proud of, might not be his own, but the offspring of his deteſted enemy.

The impreſſion of ſorrow, from whatever cauſe it is derived, mollifies the violence of rage, and the conflict of thoſe oppoſite ſentiments in the preſent inſtance, repreſſed a little the madneſs of the huſband's fury. However convinced he was of his wife's guilt, he could not be certain that the child was *not* his own: and all his rage againſt the mother could not unlooſe the bonds of affection which nature and the child's infantine endearments had twined around his heart.

Hearing

Hearing the voice of the nurſe and the maid in the paſſage, he called them into his apartment, and ſhutting the door, he, with as much ſerenity as he could aſſume, queſtioned the nurſe, whether any man was in the uſe of accoſting her at a particular place which he named, and of careſſing the child.

The woman denied that any ſuch thing had ever happened.

"Be ſure, woman, that you ſpeak truth," ſaid the Portugueſe.

"I would not depart from the truth," ſaid the nurſe, "for all the gold in Mexico."

The Portugueſe repeated the queſtion, and the nurſe gave the ſame anſwer.

"Thou abominable wretch," cried he, "I have certain information of the contrary; and nothing but an avowal of the truth ſhall ſave thee from puniſhment here, and a long expiation in purgatory hereafter!"

"I have told the truth," ſaid the woman, heſitating with conſcious falſehood.

The Portugueſe, with augmented rage and repeated threats, continued to queſtion her.

She at length acknowledged, that Signor Zeluco had ſeveral times met her at the place he mentioned, and had ſhewed great fondneſs for the child.

"Wretch!" cried the enraged Portugueſe: "Why did you deny this?"

The nurſe was ſilent.

"What harm did you imagine there was in that man's ſeeing and careſſing the child?"

"No harm in the wide world," ſaid the nurſe, "for if there had been any harm, I ſhould never have permitted it."

"Wherefore then did you conceal it from me? and wherefore did you ſo ſolemnly deny it juſt now?"

The confounded woman finding herſelf ſo hard beſet, and quite unable to extricate herſelf by prevarication, acknowledged, that ſhe had concealed it from him at the requeſt of her miſtreſs.

"I ſuſpected

"I ſuſpected as much," cried the huſband.

"But my miſtreſs," interrupted the maid, "deſired her to conceal it for no other reaſon but merely that your Honour might be ſaved the uneaſineſs of hearing that another man was in the practice of careſſing, and ſhewing ſuch paternal affection to your child."

The wrath of the Portugueſe, which had been for ſome time glowing, was ſo inſtantaneouſly kindled by this ſuggeſtion, that he ſtruck the maid an unmanly blow on the face, ſo that the blood guſhed from her noſe and mouth, in which condition ſhe ran to her miſtreſs, who was juſt returned to her own apartment.

The poor woman was exceedingly terrified at her huſband's violence, and her fear was not diminiſhed when ſhe underſtood the cauſe of it. She was now ſenſible of her imprudence, in concealing from her huſband Zeluco's treacherous viſits to her child, and in depending on the diſcretion

or fidelity of ſervants. She knew nothing however of the letter, and imagined that her huſband's ill-humour proceeded ſolely from his hearing of Zeluco's behaviour. She thought her beſt courſe was to explain the whole to him without farther delay.

She flew into his apartment, aſſured him that the information which diſpleaſed *him* had given ſtill more vexation to *her*, and that when the nurſe acquainted her with it, her own firſt impulſe had been to mention it directly to him; that ſhe ſincerely repented her not having done ſo, for ſhe was now convinced that a virtuous woman ſhould have no ſecrets concealed from her huſband.

The Portugueſe, who had liſtened hitherto with a ſtern countenance, burſt into a laugh, which forcing its way through features diſtorted with anger, and the thoughts of vengeance, chilled his wife with horror. She proceeded in a confuſed manner to aſſure him, that however improper it was not to acquaint him with what the nurſe told

told him, ſhe had refrained for no other reaſon than to ſave him uneaſineſs.

"Your faithful confident and you adhere I find to the ſame ſtory, and are both equally tender of giving me uneaſineſs," ſaid the Portugueſe, renewing his frightful laugh; "but be aſſured, faithleſs woman, that you ſhall not deceive me twice, and that your puniſhment, if poſſible, ſhall equal your guilt."

"What guilt? alas! I know no guilt," cried the trembling woman; "I am innocent as the babe newly born."

"Before you have the effrontery to ſpeak of innocence, you ſhould learn to be more careful of your letters—look at this," cried he, holding the letter open before her eyes.

"Holy Virgin!" cried the aſtoniſhed woman, as ſhe peruſed the letter; "I never ſaw this paper before,—it is a forgery of the villain's to deceive you, and ruin me."

"How came this forgery of the villain's to drop out of your pocket?" ſaid the huſband.

"It

"It aſſuredly dropped not out of my pocket," replied ſhe; "for as I hope for mercy from Heaven I never ſaw the paper before."

"No, never; to be ſure," ſaid the huſband, with a ghaſtly ſneer; "You—you are innocent as the babe newly born."

"I am indeed," exclaimed the wife; "and when you have patience and coolneſs to examine the whole matter, you will find ſo."

"What examination is neceſſary?" cried he; "what confirmation can be added to ſuch a letter as this?—this infallible evidence of your ſhame!"

"That letter is an evidence of nothing, but of the mean revenge of a diſappointed villain. I beſeech you therefore," added ſhe, laying hold of his arm; "I earneſtly beſeech you, for the ſake of your child, for your——" "Think not," interrupted he, ſhaking off her hand, "to deceive me again;—be gone to your chamber, and repent, for be aſſured that I will have ample

ample revenge." So ſaying, he thruſt her rudely out of the room, and ſhut the door with violence. She was put to bed, and paſſed the reſt of the day and the whole night in anxiety and terror.

CHAP. XX.

Unjuſt accuſations ſeldom affect us much, but from ſome *juſtice in them.*

AS ſoon as he was alone, the huſband broke open her writing-deſk; but after a very ſtrict ſcrutiny he found nothing to juſtify the inſinuations of the letter, or in the ſmalleſt degree to confirm his ſuſpicions:—"But what confirmation is needed," ſaid he, "of her criminal connexion with this man?—why ſhould he wiſh to ſee the child in a clandeſtine manner?—why did ſhe order the nurſe to conceal this from me?—And above all, this letter, in which he has in vain attempted to diſguiſe his handwriting, *muſt* have fallen from her pocket!—O! her guilt is manifeſt."

In reflections of this nature, and in forming plans of vengeance, the Portugueſe paſſed as ſleepleſs a night as his lady.

The following day ſhe was ſo ill that ſhe kept her bed; the huſband went not once to inquire for her, nor did he ſend any meſſage: he alſo kept his apartment, and was heard walking backwards and forwards with a hurried pace the whole of that day. The next forenoon the phyſician who had formerly attended Zeluco called accidentally, and was taken immediately to ſee the lady, one of the ſervants having informed him ſhe was indiſpoſed.

As ſhe had the greateſt confidence in the Doctor's good ſenſe and prudence, and knew alſo that her huſband had a very high opinion of him, ſhe informed him of the true cauſe of her illneſs; Zeluco's viſits to the child; her own imprudence in ordering the nurſe to conceal them; of his hearing of them, his jealouſy thereupon, and of the horrid anonymous letter.

The firſt thing that ſtruck the phyſician in her narrative was, that no motive was aſſigned for the baſe ſcheme the lady imputed to Zeluco: he hinted this to her.

She ſaid, it muſt have proceeded from the natural malice of the man's wicked heart; ſhe knew of no other motive.

The phyſician obſerved, that it was hardly credible that any man would form ſuch a ſhocking ſcheme without ſome more particular cauſe.

The lady perceiving the force of this remark, thought herſelf obliged to mention her firſt connexion with Zeluco; although that was a ſubject on which ſhe never thought without pain. She could not help however giving as favourable a gloſs to her ſtory as poſſible, by declaring, that Zeluco had formerly had the inſolence to make love to her; that no woman was ſafe from an inſult of this nature; yet, as it is generally imagined that men ſeldom make ſuch declarations but where they have reaſon to hope they will be well received, ſhe had naturally wiſhed to conceal this incident, though ſhe had heard his wicked propoſal with equal ſurpriſe and horror; and had, in conſequence of his perſevering, been obliged to acquaint her huſband; and, finally,

nally, ſhe now ſuſpected that the pride of the man, hurt by her reſiſtance, ſo different from what he was accuſtomed to, had prompted him to this diabolical ſcheme on purpoſe to ruin her.

It is evident that in this narrative the lady did not adhere exactly to the truth, but thought proper to ſink the circumſtance of her having at firſt agreed to meet Zeluco. If all thoſe forgive her for this part of her conduct, who, in relating facts in which themſelves are concerned, are apt to leave out what makes againſt them, and put in the moſt conſpicuous point of view whatever is in their favour, it is to be preſumed, that the Portugueſe lady will not be cenſured by a vaſt number of our readers.

The Phyſician, it is probable, made allowance for a bias ſo very general among men, and from which the fair ſex themſelves are not entirely free.

After inquiring very minutely into every circumſtance, his ſuſpicion fixed ſtrongly on the maid as an agent of Zeluco's. On his hinting this to the lady, ſhe declared, that

that of all her family this girl was the laſt ſhe could ſuſpect; becauſe ſhe had always diſplayed the moſt unbounded attachment to herſelf, and often expreſſed, particularly of late, an averſion to Zeluco.

This did not weaken the Phyſician's ſuſpicions. "Poor girl," continued the miſtreſs, "ſhe is of a delicate conſtitution, and ſubject to hyſterical fits; ſhe was much terrified by my huſband's treatment of herſelf, but ſtill more on ſeeing me ſo ill. I happened to ſay, that I feared it would kill me; on which ſhe was ſeized with a violent trembling, and has kept her bed ever ſince."

The Phyſician aſked, whether the lady had ever intruſted this maid, who ſeemed to be a great favourite, with any ſecret which it would give her uneaſineſs to have revealed.

The lady anſwered, with ſome warmth, that ſhe had no ſuch ſecret; that ſhe cared not if all the actions of her life were made public; that ſhe defied the power of malice; —and thus ſhe ran on with a zeal and fluency natural to people who are endeavouring

to juſtify themſelves, and are conſcious of not being entirely innocent; ſhe concluded by aſſerting, that there was no part of her conduct ſhe wiſhed hid from the world.

The Phyſician having waited till, being out of breath, ſhe ſtopt, he then calmly obſerved, that his queſtion was not of ſo extenſive a nature as ſhe ſeemed to imagine; that he was not ſo impertinent as to inquire whether ſhe had ever done what ſhe wiſhed to conceal from the world, but only whether *her maid was acquainted* with any thing of that nature.

"Certainly not," ſaid the lady; "ſince I am not myſelf conſcious of any ſuch ſecret, how is it poſſible that my maid could be acquainted with it?"—"I admire the acuteneſs and logical preciſion with which you reaſon, Madam," ſaid the Doctor; "but I ſhould be glad to know, whether this maid was in your ſervice at the time you mention when Signor Zeluco paid his addreſſes to you."

"If ſhe had, ſhe could have known nothing of that nature," ſaid ſhe. "Cer-

tainly

tainly not," ſaid the Doctor; "but I wiſh to know the fact, Was ſhe or was ſhe not?" "She was not," anſwered the lady. "So much the better," reſumed the Doctor. "I aſk pardon, Madam, for being ſo inquiſitive; but I thought it of importance to have this point cleared up before I viſit the maid, which I now mean to do with a view to diſcover, if poſſible, by whoſe means the letter was thrown in your huſband's way; if that can be traced to the perſon you ſuſpect, your juſtification follows of courſe."

So ſaying he left the lady, and was conducted into the maid's chamber, and left with her alone. The maid immediately inquired how her miſtreſs was?

"Your miſtreſs is very ill indeed," replied the phyſician, looking at her with a penetrating eye; "ſome monſter of wickedneſs has been bribed to ruin that worthy woman: you know of the forged letter which was thrown in your maſter's way—do you not?"

"I have heard of ſuch a thing," ſaid the maid, changing colour.

"Have you any notion who has been guilty of ſuch a perfidious action?" ſaid the phyſician, ſtill fixing her.

"Lord, Sir! how can I have any notion?" replied the maid.

"Could you have believed," reſumed the Doctor, "that ſuch a viper crawled upon the earth?"

"I could hardly have thought it," replied the maid, with a languid voice.

"Do you not think that the vengeance of Heaven will purſue the vile wretch?" ſaid the phyſician.

"Perhaps *ſhe* will repent before ſhe dies." ſaid the maid, trembling.

"*She!*" repeated the phyſician—"how do you know ſhe is a woman?"

"Me!—I,—I know nothing;—no, nothing in the leaſt," ſaid the maid, in confuſion; "only if ſhe *is* a woman, I hope ſhe will repent before ſhe dies."

"If ſhe is a woman," cried the phyſician, "ſhe is a diſgrace to her ſex, and the

vengeance

vengeance of Heaven will overtake her in this life, and hell awaits her in the next, unleſs ſhe confeſſes her crime, and prevents the ruin of an innocent lady:—But how are you yourſelf? you ſeem very ill."

"I am indeed not well," replied the maid. The phyſician, feeling her pulſe, cried with a voice of ſurpriſe, "Good God, you are very ill indeed;—let me ſee your tongue.—Gracious Heaven! what is this!—why, I had no idea of your being in this way."

"O, dear doctor," cried the maid, "do not frighten me; you do not imagine I am in danger of dying."

"Danger!" ſaid the doctor; "yes, aſſuredly: yet, perhaps,—at leaſt, I hope you ſtill may recover;—that is, provided you—in ſhort I will do all I can for you;—but if you have any ſpiritual or worldly affairs to ſettle, you had beſt ſet about it directly."

The Doctor having ordered her ſome medicines, went into the apartment of the Portugueſe, whom he found alone and in a very

very gloomy mood. He expreſſed ſatiſfaction, however, at ſeeing the phyſician, who immediately told him that his lady had informed him of what had happened. "Her aſſurance muſt equal her guilt," cried the Portugueſe, "to enable her to mention it." He then poured out a torrent of abuſe againſt his wife. The phyſician did not think proper to interrupt him; but when he had done, he coolly aſked what proofs he had of her guilt?

The Portugueſe enumerated the circumſtances of Zeluco's behaviour towards the child, his wife's having inſtructed the nurſe and maid to conceal it, and then ſhewed him the letter.

The phyſician, having heard him patiently, endeavoured to make him ſenſible that all theſe circumſtances were not ſufficient to juſtify the inferences which he drew againſt a lady who had always behaved with affection to him, and the greateſt tenderneſs to his child. "Beſides," added he, "theſe circumſtances, inconcluſive as they are, loſe much of their weight,

if

if they can all be accounted for on the very probable ſuppoſition of their being contrived by an enemy."

"The letter!—the letter!"—cried the Portugueſe: "Well," ſaid the Doctor, "the letter is of a piece with the clandeſtine viſits; it was no difficult matter to bribe ſome perſon to throw a letter in your way in ſuch a manner as that it would appear to have dropt from your lady. Recollect if there was any perſon in the room with her immediately before you obſerved the letter."

"Nobody but her own confidential maid," ſaid the huſband.

"And if an enemy had formed the ſcheme of ruining you both in this manner, who would he think of ſeducing as an aſſiſtant ſo likely as the domeſtic who attended her perſon.—Conſider alſo," continued the Doctor, "how very improbable it is that ſhe would keep ſuch a letter in her pocket."

"If guilty people were always cautious, they would not be ſo often detected as they are," ſaid the Portugueſe.

"But

"But is it not natural to think," rejoined the Doctor, "that the ſame want of caution which made her wear a letter of this importance careleſsly in her pocket, would have appeared when you examined her papers? Did you find among them any other letters to the ſame purpoſe with this?"

He anſwered, that he had not.

"This, therefore, is a fair preſumption," ſaid the Doctor, "that there never was any; that the letter you found was purpoſely thrown in your way by the direction of ſome perſon equally the enemy of you and your lady."

CHAP. XXI.

Comfortable Hints to married Men.

WHILE they were converſing, the Capuchin, who had attended Hanno in his dying moments, was introduced. This venerable perſon was ſpiritual director to all the Chriſtians white and black in the family. The Portugueſe immediately ordered, as was his cuſtom, ſome cold victuals and a large flaſk of wine to be ſet before the Father, who had only time to drink a few glaſſes when a meſſage came from the ſick maid, who earneſtly wiſhed to ſee him. He was riſing with reluctance from his repaſt, when the Phyſician begged his delay for a moment; and taking the Portugueſe to a corner of the room, he, in a few words, explained his intention, which the other, on whom the Doctor's arguments had already made ſome impreſſion, having approved, they turned to the Father, who in

in this interval had finiſhed his flaſk of wine. The Doctor then informed him, that a very unfortunate affair had happened in which he might be of ſervice; that in ſhort a diſcovery had been made, that the lady of the houſe had been unfaithful to her huſband, as was proved by a letter from her lover, which ſhe had dropt; that a plan was already formed for puniſhing her in an exemplary manner; that in the mean time ſhe was kept in confinement till endeavours were made to diſcover thoſe who had aſſiſted in carrying on the correſpondence with her lover, as there was reaſon to think ſhe had been aſſiſted by ſome perſon in the family.

The Capuchin, who was a little warmed with wine, and who valued himſelf greatly on his eloquence, and on the happy talent he thought he poſſeſſed of conſoling the afflicted, could not allow ſo fair an occaſion of diſplaying it to ſlip unimproved; addreſſing himſelf, therefore, to the Portugueſe, he expreſſed his concern for the misfortune which had happened to him, obſerving

obſerving at the ſame time, that however painful it might be, his caſe was by no means uncommon; for that a large proportion of huſbands laboured under the ſame calamity. "Not," continued he, "that I mean to inſinuate that any number being in the ſame predicament renders you, my worthy friend, leſs a cuckold than if you were the only one upon earth. I only mention this circumſtance, becauſe, although not much to the honour of human nature, yet there is reaſon to think that mankind in general derive conſolation from the thoughts of others being in the ſame diſagreeable ſituation with themſelves. I therefore aſſure you, that even among my acquaintance there are many, ſome of them very reſpectable gentlemen, to whom the ſame accident has happened that there is ſo much reaſon to think has befallen you, notwithſtanding which they live as eaſy and comfortably as they did before; this depends entirely on people's way of thinking. Things of this kind are undoubtedly rather unpleaſant at firſt; but when we

are accuſtomed to them, they give little or no uneaſineſs; for habit reconciles us to any thing."

The Capuchin was a man of influence in the iſland; and the Portugueſe, who had been, although unjuſtly, accuſed of Judaiſm, had more reaſons than one for wiſhing to keep on good terms with him; yet he could not help betraying his impatience at the reverend Father's manner of comforting him, by a moſt agonizing contortion of countenance at the laſt obſervation, which the other obſerving, he added, "I perceive, Sir, that you do not bear this diſpenſation with the reſignation you ought; I muſt therefore deſire that you will keep in your remembrance, that it has been undoubtedly permitted for ſome wiſe purpoſe; it will therefore be as impious as unavailing for you to murmur, for what has happened admits of no remedy. Now that the thing is done, it cannot be undone, at leaſt I never yet heard of any method by which a man can be uncuckolded: this, my valuable friend, is the peculiar cruelty of your caſe;

caſe; another perſon commits the crime, and you who are innocent ſuffer the ſhame. And what is ſtill more vexatious, although one wicked woman can place her huſband in this opprobrious ſtate, all the virtuous women on earth cannot take him out of it. I beg you will farther obſerve——" Here the eloquent Father was interrupted in the middle of his harangue by another meſſage from the maid; and was with ſome difficulty prevailed on by the Phyſician to go directly, without waiting to finiſh his diſcourſe.

When he was gone the Phyſician remarked to the Portugueſe, that in the preſent ſtate of the maid's mind ſhe would probably confeſs every thing ſhe knew to the Father, and was impatient to ſee him for that very purpoſe; that although the Capuchin was bound not to mention what was revealed to him in confeſſion, yet there would be no great difficulty in gathering from him, particularly in his preſent trim, the import of all the maid ſhould ſay,

without his intending to inform them of a tittle.

The Phyſician was right in his conjecture. The maid, terrified with the idea of immediate death, made a confeſſion of her ſins to the prieſt, and particularly acknowledged that ſhe had been prevailed on by Zeluco's valet, to throw under the chair of her miſtreſs a paper which he gave her, and which ſhe now, to her great affliction, underſtood had produced the moſt miſchievous conſequences to her miſtreſs; but the import of which ſhe did not fully underſtand at the time; otherwiſe, ſhe added, in alleviation of her conduct, ſhe would not have been acceſſary to ſo great a crime.

The Prieſt, although not the cleareſt-headed of his profeſſion, had underſtanding enough to tell her, that the beſt reparation ſhe could make was by a full avowal of this to her maſter, and he refuſed to give her abſolution on any other conditions. On the maid's conſenting to this, the Father returned to the Portugueſe, whom he found

in

in his apartment with the Doctor; and addreſſing himſelf to the former, he begged that he would attend him to the maid, who had ſomething of the laſt importance to communicate.

They went accordingly, accompanied by the Phyſician. The maid, with a flood of tears, and the moſt earneſt ſupplications to her maſter for his forgiveneſs, made an avowal of what ſhe had told the Prieſt; confeſſing at the ſame time, that ſhe had prevented her miſtreſs from informing him of Zeluco's interviews with the child, which was her intention the moment ſhe was informed of them; and this the maid owned ſhe had done at the deſire of the ſame valet who had given her the paper.

The Portugueſe with difficulty reſtrained his indignation againſt the woman; at length, however, he was prevailed on to ſay he forgave her, and immediately deſired to ſee the nurſe. When ſhe appeared, he aſked in what manner his wife had expreſſed herſelf when firſt ſhe was informed of Zeluco's behaviour to the child. The

nurſe naturally, and without heſitation, declared, that her miſtreſs had inſiſted on her huſband's being informed directly, but was perſuaded from that meaſure by the maid.

After a few more queſtions, being fully convinced of his wife's innocence, he repaired along with the Prieſt and the Phyſician to the apartment in which ſhe was confined;—apologized in the moſt earneſt manner for the ill-treatment ſhe had received; begged her forgiveneſs for the ſuſpicions he had harboured; declared his perfect confidence in her virtue, which, he added, it ſhould never again be in the power of villany or malice to ſhake.

CHAP. XXII.

——He
Compounds for ſins he was inclin'd to,
By damning thoſe he had no mind to.
BUTLER.

THE lady behaved with the utmoſt propriety on the occaſion; throwing the whole blame on the villain who had wove ſuch an artful net of circumſtances as might have caught the belief of the leaſt ſuſpicious of huſbands.

"Dearly ſhall he pay for his villany," ſaid the Portugueſe.

"Leave him to the torments of his own conſcience," rejoined his wife.

"In caſe his conſcience ſhould not torment him ſufficiently," ſaid the Father, "the deficiency will be amply made up to him before he gets out of purgatory."

The Phyſician then drew the Father out of the room, thinking the huſband and wife would complete their reconciliation in

the moſt ſatisfactory manner by themſelves. He told them, however, as he retired, that he would have the pleaſure of dining with them, and then walked with the Prieſt into the garden, where he remained till dinner was announced.

His view in remaining was to endeavour to turn the Portugueſe from thoughts of revenge, which he ſuſpected to be brooding in his breaſt.

Being left alone with him after they had dined, he obſerved, that however ſtrongly he was convinced of Zeluco's being the writer of the letter, yet as he had had the precaution to diſguiſe his hand-writing, it wound be fruitleſs to found any legal proſecution upon that circumſtance.

"I deſpiſe all legal proſecution," cried the Portugueſe; "but I will find means of doing myſelf juſtice without any ſuch tedious and uncertain proceſs." The Phyſician apprehending that he meant to challenge him, repreſented that as a moſt abſurd and uncertain method of repairing an injury; and the Portugueſe, who had no

ſuch

ſuch plan in his head, liſtened calmly to his arguments, and at length ſeemed to be convinced by their force, on purpoſe to deceive the Phyſician, and prevent his ſuſpecting the real deſign he had in view.

In a ſhort time Zeluco was informed that the baſe train he had laid for the ruin of the Portugueſe and his lady, with every circumſtance of his perfidious conduct, was diſcovered by the huſband; and although the particular cauſe of their miſunderſtanding was not publicly known, yet he was told that it had been whiſpered about, that he was hurrying out of the iſland to avoid the reſentment of the merchant.

This rumour determined him to poſtpone his voyage for ſome time, that he might give his enemy an opportunity of calling him to the field if he choſe it; or in caſe he did not, that the world might be convinced that Zeluco himſelf was not afraid to give him that ſpecies of ſatisfaction.

It appears in the courſe of this narrative that Zeluco, however defective he was in other virtues, poſſeſſed a conſiderable ſhare

of conſtitutional intrepidity; in the early part of his life, from ſheer vanity, he had oftener than once courted opportunities of diſtinguiſhing himſelf by a duel; and through the whole of his life he ſhewed, that whatever injuſtice or wickedneſs he was tempted to commit, he had alſo ſufficient firmneſs to juſtify, if he thought that meaſure expedient; or to fight any perſon who accuſed him when he thought proper to deny it. Courage was indeed the ſole virtue he admired in others, and the only one he poſſeſſed himſelf. It has been often ſaid, that cowards only are cruel; but although it is natural to think, and obſervation will juſtify the opinion, that they are more apt to be ſo than the intrepid; yet there are but too many proofs that one of the moſt reſpectable and brilliant qualities which can adorn the character of man, is ſometimes united to the moſt odious that can diſgrace humanity, and that courage is not incompatible with cruelty.

Of this Zeluco was a ſtriking example; and the ſame perſon who with little regret had

had forfeited the good opinion of every virtuous mind, could not brook to have it thought that he feared the reſentment of the man he was conſcious of having injured, or that he would make any apology to him, rather than run the riſk of injuring him in a more violent manner.

In the mean time the ſuſpicions of the Phyſician were not intirely removed by the diſſimulation of the Portugueſe. Notwithſtanding the latter's declining to ſeek legal or honourable redreſs from Zeluco, the Doctor perceived ſomething in his manner, which gave him the impreſſion that the Portugueſe meditated a leſs juſtifiable meaſure than either; his benevolence inclined him to prevent what his ſagacity and knowledge of the man's character led him to ſuſpect. His ſuſpicion was confirmed a very ſhort time after by the merchant's wife, who, under pretence of being indiſpoſed, ſent him a very urgent meſſage to come and ſee her.—With perturbation of mind ſhe told him, That ſhe had reaſon to dread that her huſband had formed a very criminal

criminal project of being revenged on Zeluco, and watched an opportunity of putting it in execution. She was prompted to this ſtep by no regard for Zeluco, but from a horror at the intended deed, and from anxiety for her huſband;—adding, that ſhe was afraid of diſplaying much concern, partly becauſe ſhe did not wiſh that he ſhould know of her being ſuſpicious of what he intended, and partly that ſhe might not awaken the jealous diſpoſition of her huſband;—with tears in her eyes, therefore, ſhe entreated the Doctor to exert all his influence to turn her huſband from ſuch an unjuſtifiable deſign; or if he failed, to uſe ſuch means as his own prudence could ſuggeſt to render it ineffectual.

The good Doctor applauded her conduct, and ſeized the earlieſt proper opportunity of renewing the ſubject, which he had once before touched on to the Portugueſe; adding, That he feared he ſtill harboured vindictive intentions againſt Zeluco; repreſenting the danger of ſuch a ſcheme; that however cautiouſly it might be executed, he

he would infallibly be conſidered as the perpetrator. "I know no other reaſon which you can have for ſuſpecting that I harbour ſuch intentions," ſaid the Portugueſe, "but your thinking it impoſſible, after what you know of this man's behaviour, that it ſhould be otherwiſe."

"You are miſtaken," replied the Phyſician; "I think it *ought* to be otherwiſe; and this is not my reaſon for harbouring ſuſpicions."

"I do not tell you," ſaid the Portugueſe, "that your ſuſpicions are well or ill founded; but could you be ſurpriſed if *it* were as you ſuſpect?"

"Nor ſhall I be ſurpriſed," rejoined the Doctor, "if you are convicted and executed for gratifying your revenge in ſuch an unjuſtifiable manner. Come, come, Sir," added he, "allow yourſelf to be guided by reaſon, and not impelled by paſſion in this matter: conſider what a dreadful ſituation your wife and child will be in, ſhould any misfortune befall you in conſequence of ſuch an attempt. The wiſeſt plan you can follow,

follow, ſince this man is on the point of leaving the iſland, is to let him go in ſafety, and it is probable you will never ſee him more."—Here the Portugueſe ſhook his head.—" Then, Sir," reſumed the Doctor, " your next beſt meaſure is to challenge him honourably."—" What right has a man who has acted ſo perfidiouſly to expect that he is to be ſo dealt with?" ſaid the Portugueſe. " None," replied the Doctor; " but were I in your place, I ſhould be more ſolicitous about what was reputable for myſelf, than about what my enemy had a right to expect. I only hinted this as being of two evils the leaſt; and the beſt argument that can be made uſe of to one who deſpiſes the Chriſtian religion."

" I do not underſtand you! what do you mean?" ſaid the Portugueſe. " Why that you are in that predicament," anſwered the Phyſician.

" Who! I deſpiſe the Chriſtian religion!" cried the Portugueſe, in terror and amazement.

" You

"You ſeem at leaſt to deſpiſe one of its moſt important precepts," ſaid the Phyſician; "from which it may naturally be concluded, that you have no great reſpect for the reſt."

"I do not comprehend what you mean," rejoined the Portugueſe.

"Yet I have expreſſed my meaning very plainly," ſaid the Phyſician; "I really do not think you can with propriety be called a Chriſtian."

"Jeſus Maria!" exclaimed the Portugueſe, "you fill me with horror! Why, Sir; I take the Holy Trinity, the Bleſſed Virgin, with St. Joſeph her huſband, St. James, and all the hoſt of heaven to witneſs, that I attend maſs regularly, and have always from my infancy believed in every article of faith which our holy Mother Church requires; and I am ready to believe twice as much whenever ſhe is pleaſed to exact it; if this is not being a Chriſtian, I ſhould be glad to know what is."

"Nay, my good friend," reſumed the Phyſician, "it is a matter of indifference

to

to me what you do or do not believe; I am not, I thank God, your or any man's father confeſſor: but if you underſtood the *ſpirit* of the Chriſtian religion half as well as you believe what the Church exacts, you will find that your attending maſs, and all your faith into the bargain, will not make you a Chriſtian, while you indulge ſuch a violent ſpirit of revenge."

"As for that," replied the Portugueſe, "neither the Church nor the Chriſtian religion have any thing to do with it; that is my affair, and depends on my private feelings; and it is impoſſible for me ever to forgive a villain who attempted to injure me."

"It is becauſe he attempted to injure you, that it is in your power as a man, and your duty as a Chriſtian, to forgive him. Had he never injured you, nor even attempted it," continued the Doctor, "it would indeed be impoſſible for you to have the merit of forgiving him."

It will naturally be imagined, from the vindictive character of this Portugueſe, that he was a hypocrite, and pretended to more faith

faith than he really had; but this was not the caſe. It never had occurred to his mind that there could be any doubt of the truth of thoſe tenets in which his father and mother had inſtructed him, and which he heard venerable-looking men in ſacred habits proclaim from all the pulpits of Liſbon. He was decidedly of opinion, that none but monſters of wickedneſs, who ought to be burnt in this world by way of preparing them for the next, could harbour any doubts on ſuch important points; he had indeed occaſionally heard it hinted, that ſome of thoſe doctrines were incomprehenſible, and others contradictory; but this did not convey to his judgment any reaſon for doubting of their truth. He never omitted, therefore, any of the ceremonies preſcribed by the Church: he confeſſed his ſins regularly, performed penance faithfully, would not eat a morſel of meat on a Friday on any conſideration; and with the moſt punctual perſeverance repeated daily his Pater Noſter, Ave Maria, and Credo, to

the laſt bead of his Roſary. A perſon who thought that the whole of Chriſtianity conſiſted in theſe and other ceremonies, could not but be ſurpriſed and ſhocked to hear his claim to the name of a Chriſtian diſputed. As to that thirſt for revenge on every real or imaginary injury, which he had indulged from his childhood, and ſome other culpable propenſities to which he was addicted, he conſidered all of theſe as venial foibles, which were more than expiated by his obedience to Mother Church in more eſſential points; and when his indulging in thoſe culpable practices to which he was by temper or conſtitution prone came in queſtion, he ſhrugged his ſhoulders, and ſaid, "Well, I thank God, they are neither hereſy nor ſchiſm."

The Phyſician, however, endeavoured to give him a different notion of theſe matters, founding moſt of his arguments on paſſages of a ſermon to be found in the goſpel of St. Matthew; for this happened to be a Phyſician who ſometimes read the Bible: there

there are, it would appear, ſome of that kind in America. The Portugueſe, at firſt, thought the paſſages in queſtion of a very ſingular nature; and as they were plain and intelligible, and contained nothing myſterious, he could hardly believe that they were quite orthodox: beſides, he was a good deal ſurpriſed that certain articles which he thought of great importance were not touched upon; yet on being informed who the Perſon was who had preached this ſermon, he could not deny that it had a fair chance of being found Chriſtianity. The Phyſician having brought him ſo far, found little difficulty in perſuading him that it was his duty as well as intereſt to leave Zeluco to his own wicked heart, which carried its puniſhment within itſelf; hinting alſo the probability of his falling ſooner or later within the graſp of the laws of ſociety, which his paſſions continually tempted him to violate.

It was probably owing to the remonſtrances of this extraordinary Phyſician

that Zeluco left the iſland in ſafety, and the Portugueſe merchant was indebted to him for being freed from the two moſt tormenting dæmons that can poſſeſs the human heart, Jealouſy and the ſpirit of Revenge.

CHAP. XXIII.

To whom can riches give repute and truſt,
Content and pleaſure, but the good and juſt?
Judges and ſenates have been bought for gold;
Eſteem and love were never to be ſold. POPE.

WHEN it was evident that the Portugueſe had no intention of calling Zeluco to account for his baſe behaviour, he publicly announced the time of his departure from the Havannah, and having freighted a veſſel entirely for his own uſe, after a proſperous voyage he arrived at Cadiz, where he was detained for ſome time, but as ſoon as he had tranſacted his buſineſs he proceeded to Sicily.

Soon after his arrival at Palermo, Zeluco furniſhed a houſe expenſively, and began to live in a moſt magnificent ſtyle; inviting every perſon of diſtinction to his table, and entertaining in the moſt ſumptuous manner. This way of living, with

the idea univerſally entertained of his great riches, ſoon acquired him a numerous acquaintance and the warmeſt profeſſions of attachment.

Zeluco, who had never known any motive of action but ſelf-intereſt, was not deceived by ſuch profeſſions; but while he plumed himſelf on account of his ſuperior penetration, he was the dupe of his own maxims, which being drawn from the feelings of a corrupted heart, were often erroneous.

Inſenſible himſelf to the ardour of friendſhip, he thought there was no ſuch ſentiment, and moſt certainly never had a friend. What the world calls friendſhip, in his opinion was merely a compact of convenience or intereſt between a claſs of people, in which it was tacitly agreed, that when, by the loſs of fortune, health, or otherwiſe, any individual of the aſſociation became uſeleſs to the reſt, all farther connexion with that perſon terminated of courſe.

Had Zeluco been ſatisfied with thinking this was *often* the caſe, he would have been

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in the right, but he was convinced it was *always* ſo, and there he was wrong; all declarations of attachment and friendſhip, therefore, he viewed as indirect attacks upon his purſe; the punctual attention paid to his invitations, he *rightly* conſidered as nothing elſe than a proof of the excellency of his cook, and of the ſuperior flavour of his wine.

The favourable notion which he entertained of the ſymmetry and beauty of his own perſon and face, inclined him however to believe, that the partiality which ſeveral of the ladies diſplayed towards him was void of hypocriſy, and proceeded from ſincere perſonal attachment. For Zeluco had no ſooner returned to Palermo than he became an object of great attention, and ſometimes a ſubject of controverſy among the ladies.

The elegant turn of his perſon and the graces of his countenance were univerſally admired, and even his character and diſpoſition were favourably thought of, from that common trick of the fancy which

gives the head and heart as much ſenſe and virtue as the face has beauty. But he had not remained long at Palermo till his real character began to develope itſelf, and then the graces of his countenance were called in queſtion, and his features were ſaid to convey an idea of malevolence, or even atrocity:—this happened from another play of fancy which transfers the deformity of the mind into the face.

Pleaſed with the attention paid him by the men, and the favour of ſome of the women, he paſſed his time leſs diſagreeably than he had done in the Weſt Indies. But that degree of popularity which he had obtained at his arrival gradually diminiſhed; his temper, naturally inſolent and overbearing, detached the moſt reſpectable of the men from his ſociety; and the intolerable caprice of his diſpoſition, joined to a continual jealouſy of temper, rendered him at laſt odious to the women. He therefore, with great ſatisfaction, embraced a propoſal made by a Sicilian nobleman, more diſtin-

guiſhed by rank than character, of accompanying him to Naples.

In that gay city he immediately ſet up a ſtill more ſplendid domeſtic eſtabliſhment than he had at Palermo, and as he played deep, and with apparent inattention, he was conſidered as a valuable acquiſition by ſome very faſhionable ſocieties.

CHAP. XXIV.

The frail one's advocate, the weak one's friend.
POPE.

SOON after his arrival, he was preſented to Signora Sporza. This lady was the widow of a Neapolitan nobleman, one of the pooreſt of a claſs of men in which few are rich. He had lived for two years after his marriage in a degree of magnificence more ſuitable to his rank than fortune, and died very opportunely when he had nothing left to live upon.

As, contrary to the advice of her friends, ſhe had relinquiſhed great part of the funds appropriated for the ſecurity of her own jointure, to relieve her huſband's difficulties, ſhe had nothing to ſupport her after his death, but the revenue ariſing from the ſmall part which remained, and a very moderate penſion granted to her by the court.

She

She lived however in a decent, not to ſay a genteel ſtyle, which was the more ſurpriſing, becauſe, although her huſband had left no money to maintain her, yet he contrived to leave a child by another woman for her to maintain.

Signora Sporza was not acquainted with this circumſtance till ſeveral months after her huſband's death, when ſhe was informed of it by the mother, who was then in a ſtarving condition, and who, as the wretched woman herſelf expreſſed it, would not have applied to her for relief, had ſhe not been driven by compaſſion for her infant more than for herſelf.

Thoſe ſame relations who had adviſed Signora Sporza not to relinquiſh any part of what was ſecured by marriage articles to herſelf, for the ſake of an extravagant huſband, exclaimed againſt the indecency and folly of her ſupporting an adulterous baſtard, and its wicked mother; they inſiſted upon it, that ſhe, of all women, had the leaſt call to take ſuch a load upon her. All the anſwer which Signora Sporza made

to theſe exclamations and arguments, was deſiring them to find out ſome other woman, or man, if they pleaſed, who would maintain the unhappy woman and her child, in which event ſhe was willing to yield up her claim. "Till that is done," added ſhe, "however indecent it may ſeem, I muſt be indulged in this folly."

She accordingly took both the mother and child into her houſe, where, contrary to the prediction of her relations, that the two ſerpents ſhe was taking into her boſom would certainly ſting her, they greatly contributed to her happineſs; for the wicked woman became a moſt grateful and ſerviceable domeſtic, and Signora Sporza grew as fond of the child, who was a very ſprightly boy, as if he had been her own.

This lady was of a character which rendered her univerſally agreeable; ſhe ſupported the inconveniences of very narrow circumſtances with ſo much gaiety and good-humour, underſtood the art of arranging her parties ſo judiciouſly, and animated them with ſuch pleaſantry, that her aſſemblies

aſſemblies were thought the moſt agreeable though the leaſt ſplendid in Naples. As ſhe was well received every where, and her houſe frequented by the moſt faſhionable company, Zeluco thought it worth his while to cultivate her acquaintance, and he was for ſome time a pretty conſtant attendant at her aſſemblies. One circumſtance, however, made him leſs ſo than otherwiſe he would have been; the play in general was not ſo deep as in many other aſſemblies, owing to Signora Sporza's diſcouraging it as much as ſhe eaſily could. Independent of more permanent ill conſequences, ſhe declared an averſion to deep play on account of the immediate gloom with which it overſpread every countenance engaged in it, to the entire deſtruction of all good-humour and pleaſantry. But Zeluco had a greater reliſh for deep play than for either good-humour or pleaſantry; and as he ſometimes met at Signora Sporza's with people of the ſame turn of mind, they were apt to indulge their humour in ſpite of her remonſtrances, which indeed, how-

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ever ſeriouſly *meant*, were always jocularly made.

Among the Britiſh ſubjects at this time at Naples, there were two young Engliſhmen, Mr. N—— and Mr. Steel, who lodged in the ſame houſe, although of very different characters. The Honourable Mr. N—— had already made the tour of Europe, and returned to his native country more free from narrow prejudices, leſs infected with foreign fopperies, and more improved both in knowledge and in manner, than the generality of his countrymen who have made the ſame tour. After remaining a few years at home, he was ſeized with a complaint in his breaſt threatening a conſumption, for which he was adviſed to return to Italy, and reſided for the moſt part at Naples, where he intended to remain a year longer, although at this time he ſeemed to have in a great meaſure regained his health.

Mr. N—— had been well acquainted with Signora Sporza, during his firſt reſidence at Naples, and was now on the moſt

moſt friendly footing with that lady. Beſides his companion Mr. Steel, he had introduced to her acquaintance another countryman of his own—Mr. Squander. This gentleman was diſtinguiſhed by ſpending more money with leſs enjoyment than any Engliſh traveller in Italy. Without any knowledge of horſes, or any love for the animal, he kept a ſtable of Engliſh horſes at Naples. His incitement to this was his having heard a certain peer who had a violent paſſion for the turf mentioned with admiration for having eſtabliſhed a horſe-race in the Engliſh ſtyle. Mr. Squander matched one of his horſes with one of his lordſhip's, and had the renown of loſing a greater ſum than ever was loſt at a horſe-race at Naples; what rendered this the more memorable though the leſs ſurpriſing was, that he rode himſelf. He gave frequent entertainments, to which he invited his own countrymen only; they generally ended in drunkenneſs, noiſe, and riot. He bought pictures, ſtatues, and ſeals, becauſe they were highly praiſed by the venders;

venders; and afterwards gave them away in preſents, becauſe they were deſpiſed by the reſt of the world. Without any inclination for gaming, this young man was ready on the ſlighteſt invitation to join any party at deep play, and had ſometimes been drawn into that above mentioned at Signora Sporza's. As he was the only one of this party devoid of ſkill, and who played without attention, he generally loſt the moſt, and ſometimes was the only perſon who loſt at all.

How Mr. Steel came to be connected with Mr. N—— will appear hereafter, but as he and Squander had been preſented by him to Signora Sporza, ſhe was particularly uneaſy to ſee them throw away their money. She was uncommonly attentive to ſtrangers, and rather partial to the Engliſh;—by her frank and engaging manners, ſhe gradually overcame their natural reſerve, and diſſipated their timidity; and ſome of that nation who, from the time of their croſſing the channel, had never dined but with a club of their own countrymen,

men, and had never gone twice to any other aſſembly at Naples, were inſenſibly prevailed upon to attend thoſe of Signora Sporza, and at length they went with pleaſure inſtead of reluctance.

At her aſſembly one evening, Signora Sporza perceived the ſame party forming with which Mr. Squander had loſt ſo much money. "Why do you not adviſe your countryman," ſaid ſhe, in a whiſper to Mr. N——, "to avoid theſe people, they will pillage him of all his money."

"Becauſe," replied Mr. N——, "my countryman hates advice more than he loves money."

"You Engliſhmen," reſumed ſhe, "perhaps conſider advice as an encroachment on that liberty you are ſo fond of."

"Certainly," ſaid Mr. N——, ſmiling; "the Cherokees, and other refined nations in America, think in the ſame manner."

"Will you not try then to keep him out of thoſe people's hands?" ſaid ſhe.

"I ſhould

"I ſhould try in vain, ſaid Mr. N——; "but if you pleaſe to draw him off to a ſafer party, whatever he may wiſh, he is too awkward, and will be too much embarraſſed, when a lady ſpeaks to him, to be able to excuſe himſelf."

"Baſta!" cried ſhe; and immediately accoſting Squander, "we have need of you here Signor," ſaid ſhe; and ſo ſhe engaged him for the evening with a party who played at a very ſmall ſtake.

Signora Sporza thus uſing all her addreſs to prevent deep play at her aſſemblies, and to ſave the unwary from being preyed upon, the gameſters gradually paid her leſs attention, and at laſt entirely forſook her houſe, for that of another lady with whom Signora Sporza was on ill terms, and who, out of mere ſpite, eſtabliſhed an aſſembly at her own houſe on the evenings which Signora Sporza had fixed upon.

Zeluco, although he now poſſeſſed far more wealth than he could enjoy, required the agitation of gaming to ward off the intolerable languor which is apt to invade unoc-

unoccupied minds, and alſo to preclude reflection, or retroſpect on paſt conduct, which in him was always attended with ſelf-condemnation. He therefore became a conſtant attendant at the rival aſſembly, and a conſiderable time had paſſed ſince he had waited on Signora Sporza, when he obſerved her one evening at the opera, accompanied by two ladies, neither of whom he had ever before ſeen: the elder a genteel-looking woman, between forty and fifty years of age;—the other about twenty: he gazed on the latter, and thought her by far the moſt beautiful woman he had ever beheld; the longer he looked he was the more confirmed in that opinion: he now regretted the coldneſs ſubſiſting between him and Signora Sporza, and reſolved to uſe all means for removing it, as the moſt eaſy way of being introduced to the lady whom he ſo much admired. Impatient as he was to addreſs Signora Sporza, he heſitated about doing it that night, leſt ſhe ſhould impute it to the real cauſe. A glance from the young lady brought him at once to deciſion; he could

no longer command his impatience, but leaving Signora Sporza to put what conſtruction ſhe pleaſed on his behaviour, he ſuddenly darted from his own box, and entered that in which ſhe and the two ſtrangers were. With eagerneſs, and in the moſt obſequious language, he apologized to the former for not having paid his duty to her of late, imputed it to indiſpenſable buſineſs, and begged to be permitted that honour the next morning, alleging he had ſomething of importance to acquaint her with. Having finiſhed his apology, he bowed very reſpectfully to the ſtrangers, and then looked with ſignificance at Signora Sporza, who heard him with the reſerve of offended pride, taking no notice of his ſignificant look, but after a grave bend of her head to him, reſumed her converſation with the ſtrangers as if no other perſon had been in the box. In ſpite of this very cool reception, Zeluco kept his place in the box, and his eyes almoſt conſtantly rivetted on the young lady, till the opera was finiſhed, and then attended them to their carriage;

after

after which he went home and ruminated all the reſt of the night on the charms of the fair ſtranger.

He waited next morning on Signora Sporza, who had not been an inattentive ſpectator of the impreſſion which her young friend's beauty had made on Zeluco; ſhe allowed him with the moſt cruel tranquillity to go through the ceremony of explaining his pretended affair of importance, without interrupting him, or aſſiſting him in his way to the real buſineſs which ſhe well knew was the object of his viſit.

She heard him without ſeeming to take any intereſt in what he ſaid;—the important affair did not draw from her a ſingle obſervation; he was ſo much diſconcerted by the coldneſs of her behaviour, that he was unable to introduce any diſcourſe regarding the ſtrangers. He wiſhed to do this in an indirect manner, as a thing in which he took little concern, and waited for a favourable opportunity.

"Do you know," ſaid Signora Sporza, interrupting the ſilence, "how many birds his majeſty killed yeſterday? I heard he went early a-ſhooting."

"*A-propos*," replied Zeluco; "Pray, Signora, who is that lady I had the honour of ſeeing with you yeſterday at the opera?"

"Very *à-propos* indeed," ſaid ſhe; "may I aſk which lady you mean; there were two in the box with me laſt night."

"Two!" cried Zeluco: "O yes; I now recollect there were two;—but I mean—I mean the *elder*."

"She is a very near relation of mine," replied ſhe, ſuppreſſing a ſmile; and then turned the converſation to a different ſubject, which, with the awkward manner in which he had introduced his favourite topic, increaſed his embarraſſment. Yet before he took his leave, he recovered his preſence of mind ſo far as to let a china ſnuff-box he had taken off the table, fall on the hearth, where it inſtantly ſhivered in pieces. After making becoming apologies, he took his

his leave, and the ſame day ſent a gold ſnuff-box, enriched with diamonds, with a letter to Signora Sporza, intreating her to accept of the one as an atonement for having deſtroyed the other.

CHAP. XXV.

Digna minùs miſero, non meliore viro. OVID.

SOME few days after this, Zeluco again waited on Signora Sporza. She received him with more frankneſs than at his laſt viſit; he imputed this to the benign influence of the ſnuff-box: as ſoon as he was ſeated ſhe whiſpered her maid, who inſtantly withdrew.

They talked for a while on the common incidents of the place; of a new ſinger that was expected; of a violent exploſion which had happened the preceding night from Mount Veſuvius; of the queen's having ſeemed out of humour at the laſt gala; of a man who had ſtabbed his rival in the ſtreet at mid-day, and then had taken refuge in a church; of a religious proceſſion that was to take place next morning, and of a ball in the evening.

Zeluco endeavoured to turn the converſation from thoſe topics, ſo as that it might ſeem to fall undeſignedly on that which was the object of his viſit. Signora Sporza obſerving this ſaid, "I will give you the hiſtory of the ladies by and by, Signor; but I expect two people immediately, to whom you have rendered a moſt eſſential ſervice; and you muſt permit them to thank you in the firſt place."

He could not poſſibly comprehend her meaning: but ſoon after the maid introduced a very handſome young woman, plainly dreſſed, with a child in her arms, followed by a genteel-looking man, who ſeemed to be a tradeſman, and a few years older than the woman.

Zeluco was greatly ſurpriſed at their appearance.

"This is your benefactor, Camillo," ſaid Signora Sporza, addreſſing herſelf to the man, "the generous perſon who enabled me to free you from priſon."

"I am greatly indebted to you, Signor," ſaid the man, in a moſt reſpectful yet

manly manner; "and although I do not abſolutely deſpair of being one day enabled to repay what you have ſo humanely advanced to liberate me, yet I ſhall never be free from the ſtrong ſenſe of obligation I feel towards you."

"Ah, Signor!" cried the woman, unable to contain herſelf, "you do not know what a worthy and noble-hearted man you have relieved; you do not know the extent of the bleſſed deed you have done; you have preſerved my ſweet infants from death; you have ranſomed my beloved huſband from priſon, and you have ſaved my poor brain from madneſs. O, Signor! had you but ſeen——" Here the tears obſcured her ſight; the recollection of her huſband's condition when in priſon, with the keen ſenſations of gratitude, ſuppreſſed her voice; —ſhe was ready to faint;—her huſband ſnatched the child from her arms, and the poor woman ſunk down on a chair, which SignoraSporza ſuddenly placed to receive her.

Camillo, with his child in one arm, ſupported his wife with the other; while Signora

Signora Sporza chafed her temples with aromatic ſpirits.—"Margherita will be well immediately, Camillo," ſaid Signora Sporza; "ſee, ſhe recovers already."—"Thank Heaven," cried Camillo with fervour; then begged leave to conduct his wife home. Signora Sporza attended her with Camillo and the child into another room, ordered them ſome refreſhment, and deſired they might not leave the houſe till ſhe came back.

All this was as great a myſtery to Zeluco as it is to the reader.—"If I had ſuſpected," ſaid Signora Sporza to him, as ſhe returned to the room in which he had remained, "that this poor woman would have been ſo much affected, I ſhould have ſpared you the ſcene, which I will now endeavour to explain:—I have known this young woman from her childhood; ſhe was always the moſt cheerful ſweet-tempered creature I ever knew. By my recommendation, on the death of her mother, ſhe was taken into the ſervice of the Marcheſa de B——; and in a ſhort time ſhe became

became her favourite maid. The Marchesa is liberal, and the girl was as happy as a maid could be whose mistress has the misfortune of being put out of humour every day as soon as she rises: the cause of her ill-humour was without remedy, and grew daily more inveterate; it proceeded from her observing more grey hairs on her head, and more wrinkles in her face every morning than she had seen the day before; but although her peevishness was diurnal, it did not last long at a time, for Margherita powdered her hair with wonderful expedition; and as soon as her face was varnished, and her toilet finished, she contemplated herself in the mirror with complacency, recovered her cheerfulness, and Margherita was happy for the rest of the day. Meanwhile, the man who has just left us fell in love with her, and she fell in love with him; and from that moment the girl's mind was more occupied with her lover than her mistress; whose head, after this incident, was neither so expeditiously nor so neatly dressed as formerly.

merly. When the Marcheſa found out the cauſe of this alteration, ſhe was very much out of humour indeed, and told Margherita, that ſhe muſt either give up all communication with the lover or with her;—"ſo you will conſider the difference between me and him," continued ſhe, "and then decide." Margherita accordingly did conſider the difference; and decided in favour of the man.—After leaving the Marcheſa ſhe paſſed more of her time than ever with her lover; and their mutual love increaſed to a very alarming height. Neither of them however ever thought of any other remedy than marriage; and notwithſtanding the numbers who have found it a radical cure for love, to this couple it has hitherto proved ineffectual; in the opinion of the poor people themſelves, the diſeaſe rather gains ground, although they have now been married two complete years, and have two children.

"The huſband, who was at firſt employed in the coarſe preparatory work for ſculptors, has himſelf become a tolerable artiſt; he redoubled his induſtry as his family increaſed,

increaſed, and ſaved a little money.—Margherita on her part cheered him under his labour, by the moſt active attention to family œconomy, by everlaſting good-humour, and undiminiſhed affection. The bloom and growing vigour of their children was a ſource of joyful foreboding to both.—It was delightful to contemplate the happineſs of this little family. I often called on Margherita, purely to enjoy that happineſs; health, content, and mutual love reſided under their humble roof: obtaining with difficulty the ſuperfluities, or even neceſſaries of life, they taſted pleaſure with a reliſh unknown to thoſe who have the overflowing cup of enjoyment conſtantly preſſed to their lips. The gloom of their poverty was cheered by ſome of the brighteſt ſtars of pleaſure, and by the hope of permanent ſun-ſhine. But all this fair and ſerene proſpect was ſuddenly obſcured by a terrible ſtorm. The imprudent huſband, impatient to become rapidly rich, was perſuaded to collect all the little money which he had ſaved, to accept of a larger ſum on credit, and to riſk the whole in a commercal

commercial adventure:—the whole was loſt;—and the obdurate creditor immediately ſeized on all the furniture and effects of this little family, and threw Camillo into jail.—Margherita, half-diſtracted, came and told me her ſtory. It happened by a ſuper-abundance of ill luck that I was very low in caſh myſelf, and had overdrawn my credit with my banker; I gave her what I had, but it was not ſufficient to procure her huſband's liberty, which happened to be what poor Margherita was moſt ſolicitous about. I begged of her to call on me the following morning, determining then to go in ſearch of the neceſſary ſum; but before I ſet out, the ſnuff-box, of which you deſired my acceptance, arrived: inſtead of going to borrow money, Signor, which, if you ever had the experience of it, you muſt know to be the moſt diſagreeable thing on earth, I went and ſold the ſnuff-box, and in my opinion to very great advantage; for the ſum I received has not only freed the poor fellow from priſon and redeemed his effects, but alſo makes him a little richer than he was before

before his unfortunate attempt in commerce. I informed the joyful couple that I had received the money from you, which in effect I did; they know no more of the matter; and now that you have heard the whole, and have ſeen the family whom your bounty has ſaved, I am convinced you will approve of what has been done."

Zeluco expreſſed great admiration of the benevolence of Signora Sporza, but inſiſted on redeeming the ſnuff-box, and reſtoring it to her. This ſhe abſolutely refuſed, ſaying, That the circumſtances which ſhe had related formed the only conſideration which could have prevailed on her to accept of a preſent of that value; but ſhe was willing to receive from him a ſnuff-box of the ſame kind with that he had ſo fortunately broken, which ſhe would wear as a memorial of that happy event. Zeluco, finding her obſtinate, was obliged to agree to this compromiſe of the matter.

It was already obſerved, that Zeluco was greatly ſurpriſed when Margherita was preſented to him: he had, however, frequently

ſeen

ſeen her before; and this was one reaſon of his being a little confounded at her appearance at Signor Sporza's; but on recollecting, that although he knew her, yet ſhe did not know him, he re-aſſumed his compoſure.

In going to church, Margherita uſually had paſſed the windows of Zeluco's apartment, and he had often remarked her as ſhe went and returned to and from maſs.

Being ſomewhat captivated by her face and perſon, he employed an agent to find out where ſhe lived, and what ſhe was; and afterwards commiſſioned the ſame perſon to engage her to meet a *very honourable gentleman*, who was greatly captivated with her beauty, at a houſe appropriated for a rendezvous of this nature. Margherita rejected the offers of the agent, baffled the arts employed to ſeduce her, and would have nothing to do with the very honourable gentleman.

This unexpected reſiſtance increaſed Zeluco's ardour. His valet was acquainted with the man who had lent Camillo the money which the imprudent fellow had ſunk

ſunk in the ill-judged commercial adventure. This man, who thought his money in little or no danger when he firſt advanced it, was now exceedingly uneaſy, and had already begun to preſs Camillo for payment. The valet acquainted Zeluco with thoſe circumſtances, who inſtructed the valet to perſuade the creditor, that it was vain for him to expect that ever Camillo could pay the money; and that as long as he was left at large, none of his friends would think of advancing it for him; but that if he were thrown into priſon for the debt, ſome of his or his wife's friends would then certainly ſtep forth for his relief. The man ſcrupled to uſe ſo violent an expedient; but having mentioned it to his wife, by whom Margherita was envied on account of her ſuperior beauty, and hated on account of her unblemiſhed character, ſhe preſſed her huſband to adopt this harſh expedient, as the only means of recovering his money. The creditor, however, ſtill heſitated, till the valet aſſured him, under the obligation of an oath of ſecrecy, that he knew a perſon who would

advance

advance a ſum ſufficient to pay all Camillo's debts, rather than allow him to remain long in priſon; and he became bound himſelf to do this if Camillo was not releaſed by the other within a month.

Zeluco, who took care not to appear in all this infamous tranſaction, imagined, that when Margherita was once ſeparated from her huſband, and humbled by diſtreſs, ſhe would then liſten to the ſecret propoſals he intended to renew through his former agent.

The creditor having given orders to his attorney to proceed to extremities againſt Camillo, went himſelf to the country, that he might avoid a ſcene which his heart was not hard enough to ſupport. But his orders were executed very punctually on the very day in which Zeluco was ſo much ſtruck with the beauty of the young lady at the opera. She had engroſſed his mind ſo entirely, that from that moment he never once thought of Margherita, till he ſaw her introduced with her huſband at

Signora Sporza's, and found that the present he had ſent to that lady with a very different view, had been the means of relieving a family brought to the brink of ruin by his inſidious arts.

CHAP. XXVI.

On aime à deviner les autres, mais on n'aime pas à être deviné. ROCHEFOUCAULT.

WHATEVER ſhame or compunction Zeluco felt on receiving praiſes he ſo little deſerved, for conferring benefits which he never intended, he certainly ſupported the character he had to act with great aſſurance.

After the compromiſe already mentioned, Signora Sporza gave him the following account of the ladies whoſe hiſtory he was ſo impatient to know. The elder, ſhe ſaid, was her couſin-german, and widow of Colonel Seidlits, an officer lately deceaſed in the king of Pruſſia's ſervice. She was a Neapolitan by birth, who finding it diſagreeable after her huſband's death to remain at Berlin, where ſhe could not afford to live in the ſame ſtyle ſhe had formerly

done, had lately returned to her native country, with her daughter Laura; that ſhe inherited from her father a ſmall eſtate in the Campagna Felice, and her inclination for removing from Berlin to Naples had been ſtrengthened by the hopes of making good a claim ſhe had in right of an uncle, which, although of no great value in itſelf, was of great importance to her in her very circumſcribed circumſtances; and which, however juſt, did not the leſs depend on the favour of the miniſter.

Zeluco expreſſed much concern that two ladies of their merit ſhould labour under difficulties; adding, that on account of their connection with her, he ſhould think himſelf very happy in having it in his power to be of ſervice to them.

Signora Sporza penetrated into the motive of Zeluco's proffered ſervices; but ſhe alſo knew that he was on an intimate footing with the miniſter, and might be of eſſential ſervice to her couſin, in the affair of her claim, the deciſion of which had been hitherto protracted on the moſt frivolous

pretexts

pretexts in the moſt litigious manner. It muſt be confeſſed, that, in the warmth of Signora Sporza's zeal to ſerve her friends, ſhe was often regardleſs of the motive from which thoſe who ſerved them acted: could ſhe have induced Zeluco to ſerve Madame de Seidlits from pure and honourable motives, no doubt ſhe would have preferred it; but that not being in her power, ſhe thought the next beſt was to ſecure the ſame effect whatever produced it. After thanking Zeluco therefore for his obliging offer, ſhe added, That if he would do her the pleaſure of calling in the evening, ſhe would preſent him to her two relations; and that Madame de Seidlits would herſelf explain to him the grounds of her claim.

Being introduced accordingly to the two ladies as a friend of Signora Sporza, he became intoxicated with the elegant ſweetneſs of Laura's manner, which he found equal to her beauty, and liſtened with much ſeeming attention and apparent ſolicitude to the hiſtory of her mother's ſuit, expreſſing

great zeal to ſerve her on that or any other occaſion.

The nobleman with whom Zeluco came to Naples had conſiderable influence with the miniſter: Zeluco himſelf had more; both were employed in giving him a favourable idea of Madame de Seidlits's caſe, or rather in inſpiring him with a deſire of promoting it, independent of the right on which it was founded. It is probable that Zeluco was thinking on ſomething elſe during that part of Madame de Seidlits's narrative, for the foundation of her claim was what he was unable to explain, but it was alſo what the miniſter ſhewed no anxiety to underſtand. Soon after, however, he publicly hinted, that having taken much pains to get a clear idea of Madame de Seidlits's claim, he was led to believe that the judges would decide in her favour. As the miniſter's prophecies of this kind were generally accompliſhed, Madame de Seidlits was congratulated on this happy omen, as if ſhe had already gained her cauſe;

cauſe; and ſhe imputed this fair proſpect to the interpoſition of Zeluco.

From this time he had frequent opportunities of ſeeing and converſing with Laura, and he exhauſted all his power of inſinuation to ingratiate himſelf into her good opinion, but without ſucceſs. This young lady had more penetration into character, and a far juſter way of thinking than any of her ſex with whom he had hitherto been acquainted; the ſame arts which had rendered him agreeable to many of them, had a contrary effect on her: ſhe was not pleaſed when ſhe obſerved, that, as often as he found her alone, his converſation was much interſperſed with compliments on her beauty. She had been ſufficiently accuſtomed to ſweeteners of this kind, not to value them above their worth; and ſhe had remarked, that they proceeded as often from a contempt of the underſtanding as from an admiration of the beauty of the perſon to whom they were addreſſed. But whatever doubts Laura might have of Zeluco's ſincerity when he expreſſed a high

opinion of *her* merit, there was ſomething in his air and manner which convinced her he had a very high opinion of his own. In this, however, Laura was in ſome degree miſtaken; for notwithſtanding the loftineſs of his manner, Zeluco's ſelf-conceit was confined to his external figure, to his addreſs, and his natural talents; he was conſcious of having neglected the opportunities of improvement, and lamented the want of certain accompliſhments which he with envy ſaw others poſſeſs; for with whatever plauſible varniſh he concealed his foibles or vices from the ſight of others, he found it impoſſible to hide them from his own; ſo that when flattery poured the honey of adulation into his cup, the unconquerable power of conſcience often turned it into gall, and rendered him unable to ſwallow the nauſeous draught; yet by a ſingular effect of ſelfiſh caprice, though ſenſible of his own failings and vices, he deteſted all whom he ſuſpected of having ſufficient penetration to ſee into his real character, and of harbouring the ſame ſentiments with himſelf,

ſelf. He could ſupport the company of thoſe only upon whoſe underſtandings he imagined he impoſed, by giving them a much better idea of his character than it deſerved. This accounts for his conſtant preference of ignorant ſociety, and for the gloom and diſſatisfaction which attended him as often as he was not engaged in ſuch purſuits as kill thought and reflection. Yet this diſſatisfied miſerable man, on whoſe mind repentance and remorſe were often obtruding themſelves, was, on account of his wealth and the ſplendid ſtyle in which he lived, conſidered by many as remarkably fortunate and happy.

We are never more apt to be miſtaken than in our eſtimate of the happineſs of grandeur. The grove overlooking the precipice has a fine effect at a diſtance; we admire the ſublimity of its ſituation, and the brightneſs of its verdure when gilded by the rays of the ſun; we grudge no labour in ſcrambling up to this ſeat of pleaſure, which, when attained, we often find cold and comfortleſs, overgrown with moſs, pierced

pierced by the winds of every quarter, and far leſs genial than the ſheltered bank from whence we ſet out. In like manner many men, who are viewed with admiration and envy at a diſtance, become the object of pity or contempt when nearly approached. Of this we may be moſt aſſured, that all the decorations of rank and the ſmiles of fortune cannot prevent the intruſions of remorſe and ſelf-condemnation upon a mind ſenſible of having abuſed talents, and neglected through life the opportunities of improvement; far leſs can they convey happineſs, or even tranquillity, to one conſcious of perfidy, cruelty, and ingratitude. But Laura did not at this time know that the peace of Zeluco's mind was diſturbed by intruders of this nature; and the vain ſatisfaction which he frequently enjoyed from the contemplation of his face and figure, ſhe imagined extended to his whole character, and rendered him, in her opinion, by much too well ſatisfied with himſelf.

However

However profuſe of panegyric Zeluco was, as often as he happened to find Laura by herſelf, yet he always ſtopt ſhort, and abruptly changed the tenor of his diſcourſe when her mother joined them.

This did not eſcape the obſervation of Laura; and one day on his making this ſudden tranſition as Madame de Seidlits entered the room, Laura ſaid to him gravely, "There is no need, Signor, for you to fly from the ſubject on which you have dwelt ſo long! I do aſſure you, the praiſes of my beauty are to the full as agreeable to my mother, as they are to myſelf."

At this unexpected remark, Zeluco's countenance ſuddenly diſplayed ſtrong marks of diſpleaſure, and even rage; but recollecting himſelf, he inſtantly ſmoothed it over with the ſmile of good-humour; and having bowed, and inquired after the health of Madame de Seidlits, he turned to Laura, ſaying, "I fly not from the ſubject, Madam; the praiſe of your good qualities is the moſt delightful of all ſubjects to me; but a ſudden thought ſtruck me imme-

immediately before your mother entered the room."

"A ſudden thought ſeemed to ſtrike you alſo *after* ſhe entered," ſaid Laura, "if one may judge from the alterations in your countenance."

"I know nothing of my countenance," ſaid Zeluco, with a careleſs air; "but I have great ſatisfaction at my heart in informing you, Madam," continued he, and turning to Madame de Seidlits, "that your claim is admitted to his fulleſt extent, of which you will have more formal notice this very day from the court."

Madame de Seidlits expreſſed a ſtrong ſenſe of obligation to Zeluco, imputing her ſucceſs to his influence and exertions; he on his part affected to place it wholly to the juſtice of her cauſe; expreſſing aſtoniſhment, however, at its having been delayed ſo very long, and with an oſtentatious air of modeſty diſclaiming any kind of merit from *his poor feeble* efforts.

When Zeluco withdrew, Madame de Seidlits ſpoke of him with all the partiality of

of gratitude. Laura aſſented with coolneſs and moderation; ſhe had obſerved ſomething in his looks and conduct which diſpleaſed her, and conveyed ſome faint ſuſpicion of his motives. Madame de Seidlits did not refine on looks or language; ſhe founded her idea of Zeluco's general character on the perſonal obligations ſhe lay under to him. On occaſions of this nature the mother is generally more prone to be ſuſpicious than the daughter; in this particular inſtance it was otherwiſe: Laura had as much ſenſibility to the impreſſions of gratitude as her mother; but having doubts reſpecting Zeluco's diſpoſition and motives, ſhe would have been more pleaſed if the favour had come from another hand.

CHAP. XXVII.

La phyſionomie n'eſt pas une régle qui nous ſoit donnée pour juger des hommes; elle nous peut ſervir de conjecture. LA BRUYERE.

MADAME DE SEIDLITS felt great ſatiſfaction in the thoughts of her having at length obtained juſtice; and the good and friendly character of Zeluco was the frequent theme of her panegyric. When ſhe was dwelling one day on this favourite topic, "It is unfortunate," ſaid Laura, "that the expreſſion of his countenance correſponds ſo ill with the qualities of his heart."

"I do not know what you mean, my dear," ſaid the mother; "few men are ſo handſome as Signor Zeluco."

"It is, I believe, generally thought ſo," ſaid Laura; "but I confeſs I am not of the general opinion."

"No! that a little ſurpriſes me."

"When

"When I ſpeak of the expreſſion of the countenance," reſumed Laura, "I mean ſomething different from beauty or uglineſs; there are many men whom I think plainer than Signor Zeluco, whoſe countenance has nothing of that expreſſion, which I think rather diſagreeable in his."

"Am I to underſtand, child," ſaid Madame de Seidlits, ſmiling, "that a man may be too handſome to be agreeable to you?"

"You would laugh at me if I ſaid ſo," replied Laura; "yet if a man ſeems too ſenſible of his being handſome, you muſt admit that he is the leſs agreeable on that account."

"When a man happens to be handſome," replied Madame de Seidlits, "people are apt to conclude, without any other reaſon, that he is vain of his looks."

"I am not, however, ſo unjuſt," ſaid Laura; "for example, I agree with the general opinion in thinking Mr. N——, the Engliſhman who is ſo often at our couſin's, very handſome; yet he is ſo free from airs,

airs, and all appearance of conceit, that it it impoſſible to think him vain. *His* features expreſs goodneſs of heart, but I have ſeen features which, conſidered ſeparately, ſeem as good, and yet the countenance on the whole, to which they belong conveys the idea of the reverſe."

"I do not admit," replied Madame de Seidlits, "that this is the caſe with Signor Zeluco's."

"Perhaps I am whimſical in this point," ſaid Laura; "but I am convinced a man may be hard-favoured, and yet give no idea of his being a bad man. And with reſpect to Signor Zeluco, I do think that thoſe who do not know from experience that he is of a good character, might be apt to ſuſpect him of a bad."

"Nothing depends more on whim, or is more uncertain, than the pretended art of phyſiognomy," ſaid Madame de Seidlits.

"Yet it never fails to have ſome influence on our opinion," cried Laura.

"It ought not," replied Madame de Seidlits; "it may miſlead us greatly: Did you

you ever, for example, behold a more lovely face than that of the wretched woman we ſaw the other night at the opera? yet her profligate life is well known. You may recollect alſo, how very hard and unpleaſant the countenance of your father's friend Colonel Sleiffen was; yet there never exiſted a worthier man. You ought therefore, my dear Laura, to beware of imagining that vice is connected with deformity, or virtue with external beauty."

"I beg pardon, my dear Madam," replied Laura, "but I might uſe the two inſtances you have given in ſupport of my argument; for the opera woman you mention, in ſpite of her beauty, I ſhould never have thought a perſon of a virtuous diſpoſition; and I always imagined I ſaw benevolence ſhining through the harſh features of Colonel Sleiffen."

"I ſuſpect," replied Madame de Seidlits, "that a previous knowledge of their character led your opinion in both caſes, and I am ſure that candour and charity ought to prevent our ſuſpecting any perſon of be-

ing bad, till we have reaſon to believe ſo from their conduct."

"I do aſſure you, my dear mother," ſaid Laura, "that it always gives me pain to think ill of any body, and it affords me ſincere pleaſure to find them better than I expected."

"Have you any reaſon to think ill of Signor Zeluco?" ſaid Madame de Seidlits, with ſome emotion; "I remember you ſaid ſomething that ſeemed unpleaſant to him as I entered."

"Why, no,—no," replied Laura, with a little heſitation; "he was paying me a few compliments, and ſtopped ſhort as you entered. I only hinted to him that I liked no converſation when you were *not* preſent, that he judged improper when you were. But as to thinking ill of him,—I have—I have no reaſon;—we were talking of his looks."

"*They* afford no reaſon indeed," ſaid Madame de Seidlits; "I hope experience, my dear, will teach you to judge of worth by

by ſome more certain criterion than the features of the face."

"I hope it will, my deareſt madam," replied Laura, taking her mother's hand affectionately in both hers, "and till then my opinions ſhall be directed by your judgment; of this you may reſt aſſured, that nothing can ever influence me to think ill of thoſe whom you *continue* to think well of."

CHAP. XXVIII.

Illa quidem primò nullos intelliget ignes.
OVID Metamorph. Lib. 9.

ZELUCO had been diſconcerted, as has been mentioned, and was a little piqued at the manner in which Laura received the compliments that he paid her, and what ſhe ſaid in his hearing to her mother; but he was ſtill more mortified to perceive the indifference which ſhe diſplayed towards him on all occaſions, notwithſtanding his peculiar attention to her, and the pains he took to gain her regard. Had Laura been thoroughly acquainted with Zeluco's character, the diſtaſte ſhe had to him would not have been ſurpriſing, but ſhe had not had ſufficient opportunity of knowing him; ſhe ſaw ſomething in his manner indeed, and in the expreſſion of his countenance, which ſhe did not like, yet it might have been

been expected that the elegance of his perſon, and the ſplendour of his wealth, would have inclined her to get the better of this prejudice, as perhaps they would, had not her imagination been prepoſſeſſed in a manner which will appear ſingular.

Laura's father had a ſon by a former marriage, who was now a captain of dragoons in the Pruſſian ſervice. This gentleman's moſt intimate friend was the Baron Carloſtein, a man of family and very conſiderable fortune. They ſerved together under the great Frederic, in the ſhort war concerning the Bavarian ſucceſſion.

After one unfortunate ſkirmiſh a ſmall detachment which Carloſtein commanded, formed the rear of the retreating party, and defended a particular poſt with great obſtinacy, that the main body might have time to make good their retreat; as he was falling back at laſt, his detachment was ſurrounded by a numerous party of Auſtrian Huſſars, and, notwithſtanding a very ſteady reſiſtance, would have been cut to pieces,

or made priſoners, had not Captain Seidlits, at the head of a few dragoons, made a deſperate charge, by which the Huſſars were diſperſed, and Carloſtein, with the ſurvivors of his detachment, brought off.

This was the commencement of a very intimate friendſhip between theſe two officers. At the termination of the war, Captain Seidlits prevailed on his friend to paſs a few days at a little villa belonging to his father, in the neighbourhood of Berlin; Laura was then a child between ten and eleven years of age. She had often heard her father, and other officers, mention Carloſtein as a young man of the greateſt hopes; ſhe had heard many ladies talk of him as remarkably genteel and amiable. Her brother had written in terms of high admiration of Carloſtein's conduct in the action above-mentioned, and ſhe had heard his letters read to the company at her father's table. When Laura underſtood, therefore, that the perſon whom ſhe had

had heard ſo much applauded was coming to her father's houſe, ſhe expected to ſee a hero. The appearance and manners of Carloſtein did not belie her expectation: during the ſhort ſtay which he made at the villa, he was treated by Colonel Seidlits and his lady with that diſtinguiſhed hoſpitality which it was natural they ſhould pay to a man of his character and rank, the intimate friend of their ſon. What Laura had heard of this young officer, the reſpect paid him by her parents, the affectionate attachment of her brother, his own figure and elegant manners, tended to fire her fancy, and render him, in her mind, the firſt of human beings. He had received a wound with a ſabre on one ſide of his brow, which reached beneath his temple: the ſcar was covered with a ſlip of black plaſter, appearing peculiarly graceful in the child's eyes, and a confirmation of the heroic character of Carloſtein. Colonel Seidlits and his lady perceived Laura's admiration of their gueſt, and were amuſed with the earneſt manner in which ſhe ſome-

times looked at him, and the pleaſed attention with which ſhe liſtened when he ſpoke.

The Colonel one day obſerved her examining a print of Le Brun's picture of the family of Darius.—"What has caught your fancy here?" ſaid he, coming behind and tapping her on the ſhoulder. The child imagined that ſhe ſaw a likeneſs to Carloſtein's in the countenance which Le Brun gives to Alexander.—"Do you not think," replied ſhe, "that this face," pointing to Hæpheſtion, "has a reſemblance of my brother?"

The Colonel having looked attentively at the print, and obſerving the reſemblance which *really* had attracted Laura's attention, fell a laughing, and replied, "No my dear, I cannot ſay I do,—but I own I am ſomewhat ſurpriſed that the reſemblance between *this* face," pointing to Alexander, "and your friend Baron Carloſtein, ſeems entirely to have eſcaped ſo accurate an obſerver as you are."

The

The child ſeemed a little out of countenance, and when Colonel Seidlits recounted the circumſtance to his lady, he added, "I ſhould be glad to know at what age a young lady begins to diſguiſe her ſentiments?"—"At the ſame age that young gentlemen begin to diſguiſe theirs," replied Madame de Seidlits; "when they ſuſpect, from the behaviour of thoſe around, that there is ſomething wrong or ridiculous in their ſentiments. We firſt taught Laura," continued ſhe, "to admire the Baron, and afterwards by laughing at the child for the marks of admiration which ſhe ſhews, we give her a notion that there is ſomething ridiculous in it, of courſe ſhe wiſhes to conceal what expoſes her to raillery. A boy would have done the ſame."

"I imagine not exactly in the ſame way," replied the Colonel.

Carloſtein went ſoon after to his eſtate in a diſtant part of the Pruſſian dominions; he afterwards paſſed ſome time in France; on his return to his own country, his duty as a ſoldier kept him with his regiment,

and

and he had never after ſeen Laura, or thought of her more, than as an agreeable child, the ſiſter of his friend.

The impreſſion which he made on *her* imagination was certainly ſtronger, and more permanent; although her parents conſidered this partiality of Laura's to Carloſtein as

> A violet in the youth of primy nature,
> Forward, not permanent; ſweet, but not laſting,
> The perfume and ſuppliance of a minute*.

Laura herſelf endeavoured to conceal it to prevent the raillery to which it expoſed her; yet it had ſome influence in making her reject the addreſſes of more than one lover before ſhe left Germany; all of whom were thought advantageous matches, conſidering the ſmallneſs of her fortune. She found them to fall ſo far beneath the accompliſhed Carloſtein, that ſhe did not heſitate a moment. The ſame impreſſion, though now conſiderably weakened by time, tended to make her view Zeluco with indifference, and often with diſlike:

* Shakeſpeare.

ſo

ſo much did he fall below that model of which ſhe ſtill carried the traces in her memory. In this preference, Laura proved that her judgment was not directed by external appearance, for in the general opinion, Zeluco would have paſſed for a handſomer man than Carloſtein.

CHAP. XXIX.

Non, te Penelopen difficilem procis,
Tyrrhenus genuit parens. HORAT.

HOWEVER much Zeluco was mortified and piqued at the indifference of Laura, his paſſion for her rather ſeemed to augment than to cool. As the houſe where he had the moſt convenient opportunities of meeting with her was that of Signora Sporza, he thought it indiſpenſably neceſſary to keep that lady in conſtant good humour with him; with this view he cultivated her favour with the moſt reſpectful aſſiduity. He attempted in vain, however, to prevail on her to accept of any preſent of value: ſhe always declined his offers with good-humour and gaiety, ſaying, nobody in whom ſhe was particularly intereſted, was at that time in *priſon for debt*; but when any ſuch caſe occurred, ſhe would

would apply to him for a ring or ſnuff-box proper for their relief. Zeluco conſidered all this as mere affectation and grimace, and was convinced that ſhe would, in due time, unfold the particular mode in which ſhe wiſhed to be indemnified; for he took it for granted, that indemnified in one ſhape or other ſhe intended to be, for whatever civility ſhe ſhewed, or whatever trouble ſhe took on his account. In the meantime, he plainly perceived that ſhe would not ſtoop to be directly aſſiſting to his views on Laura. He imagined ſhe had come to a reſolution to obſerve a neutrality, till ſuch time, at leaſt, as ſhe could exact a very large ſubſidy for acting as an auxiliary.—But in theſe conjectures he had entirely miſtaken the character of the lady.

Bred in a country where a very free ſyſtem of gallantry prevails, Signora Sporza certainly did not view it in the light that a virtuous woman ought. In her youth, ſhe had been a coquette, and ſhe retained ſomething of that appearance at an age when coquetry is leſs tolerable: which

which gave a handle to her enemies to inſinuate that ſhe had carried matters beyond the point at which ſimple coquetry is ſuppoſed to ſtop; this, however, they were never able to aſcertain;—and as thoſe who were moſt induſtrious to ſpread the inſinuation were, with better grounds, thought to be in that predicament themſelves, their malice had the leſs effect. Her conſtant good-humour, humane diſpoſition, and eaſy manners, rendered her highly agreeable to ſociety in general; and ſhe had lived on the beſt terms with her huſband, undiſturbed with jealouſy, notwithſtanding his being an Italian.

Her talent for raillery ſhe managed with ſuch addreſs, as to render it entertaining in general, without being offenſive in particular. Mere dull downright ſcandal, which had no object but the gratification of malice, ſhe deteſted, and conſidered the circulation of every ſtory to the diſadvantage of others, as inexcuſable even although founded in truth. When a connection of a particular kind ſubſiſted be-

tween

tween two people, of different ſexes, nobody was more quick than Signora Sporza in perceiving it; yet ſhe was never heard to give the leaſt hint of her knowledge or ſuſpicion of ſuch an intrigue. If the parties met openly at her aſſemblies, ſhe received them with her uſual politeneſs; if either of them made her acquainted with their intimacy, ſhe would not ſuffer them to viſit her afterwards. She never would be the confident of a love intrigue; becauſe acceſſaries, ſhe ſaid, were as guilty as the principals, with far leſs temptation; beſides, ſhe added, as the loving couple generally quarrel afterwards, and ſometimes go the length of hating each other, part of this hatred may extend to thoſe who encouraged their connection.

Another of this lady's maxims was, that nothing ſhould ever be told concerning one friend of another, particularly to a huſband of his wife, or to a wife of her huſband, which would give them pain to know. If what is told is falſe, all the world agrees, that the tale-bearer has done

a very ill thing; and if it happens to be true, in Signora Sporza's opinion, a much worſe; for a malicious falſehood, ſaid ſhe, ceaſes to do harm when the truth comes to be known, but the miſchief attending a malicious truth is more durable. Jealouſy, whether well or ill founded, ſhe conſidered as the greateſt plague of ſociety; a jealous huſband or wife ſhe thought the moſt odious of all odious animals, and as carefully to be excluded from good company as mad people or cut-throats. She had no ſcruple in declaring that, in her opinion, the man was devoid of principle who intrigued with any gentlewoman, however willing ſhe might be, before ſuch gentlewoman was provided with a huſband, or at leaſt within a very ſhort time of being ſo: and ſhe thought *that* man was very little better, who did not take due precautions to prevent his intercourſe with a woman of reputation from becoming public, even although the lady was married.

As Signora Sporza had no favourable opinion of Zeluco from her firſt acquaintance

ance with him, and even ſtrongly ſuſpected the nature of his views on Laura; it will ſeem extraordinary, that ſhe did not communicate theſe ſuſpicions to Laura, or to Madame de Seidlits, for both of whom her eſteem and affection hourly increaſed;—the truth is, it was this very affection that prevented her. She expected to make Zeluco's attachment to Laura, and his influence with the miniſter, of ſervice to her friends in other ſchemes which ſhe meditated for their benefit; but ſhe ſaw plainly, from the avowed principles and undeviating conduct of both the mother and daughter, that on the ſlighteſt idea of his views on Laura, they would renounce all connection with Zeluco, and ſpurn at every advantage that could attend it. Having a very high opinion, therefore, of Laura's prudence, on which ſhe relied much, and believing in her averſion to the man, on which ſhe relied more, ſhe permitted him quietly to proceed in his ſcheme, convinced however that he would be ſucceſsful only in promoting her's.

There certainly was little delicacy in Signora Sporza's way of thinking on this, and ſome other ſubjects; and as ſhe was of a friendly benevolent diſpoſition, and poſſeſſed ſome excellent qualities, it is to be regretted that they were intermingled with any of baſer alloy.

Our only reaſon for deſcribing men and women as animals of heterogeneous compoſition, made up of bad as well as good materials, is, that we have hitherto always found them ſo; but we ſhall be happy to delineate uniform and perfect characters as ſoon as we have the good fortune to meet their prototypes in nature. There is room to fear, however, that they are as difficult to find as they would be agreeable and eaſy to deſcribe; and that the race of thoſe perfect beings incapable of weakneſs, and invulnerable to vice, who are ever armed at all points, and caſed in virtues as the knights of chivalry were in mail, has intirely failed, as well as that of thoſe tremendous giants, void of every virtue, and replete with every vice, who lived in the

the ſame ages;—till theſe oppoſite extremes, men intirely good or completely wicked, appear again, we muſt be contented with that mediocrity of character which prevails, and draw mankind as we find them, the beſt ſubject to weakneſſes, the worſt imbued with ſome good quality.

In a character, ſuch as that of the perſon whoſe ſtory we have the unpleaſant taſk of recording, there are, perhaps, fewer good qualities than in any other, becauſe cruelty was become the baſis of Zeluco's character, at leaſt a total diſregard to the feelings of his fellow-creatures, when any intereſt or gratification of his own was in queſtion.

This diſpoſition of the mind, we conceive, admits of fewer good qualities, and is connected with a greater number of bad, than any other of which human nature is ſuſceptible.—Montaigne, indeed, has ſaid, "*Nature a (ce crains-je), elle meme attaché à l'homme quelque inſtinct à l'inhumanité**." But it is to be hoped, that

* Eſſais de Montaigne, livre II. chap. xi.

the inſtinct he mentions belongs only to devils, and that a *diſintereſted* pleaſure in the ſufferings of others exiſts not even in the moſt wicked of human breaſts. It is ſufficiently deplorable that any of mankind are capable of purſuing what they conſider as their own intereſt, and ſometimes intereſt of a very frivolous nature, at the expence of extreme miſery to their fellow-creatures. The proofs, however, of this degree of cruelty need not be drawn from the ſtories of giants, and records of chivalry; they are frequently found in more authentic hiſtory, and may be adduced from the conduct of too many of the heroes and great men of antiquity; not to mention the great men of our own days, whoſe ſentiments and conduct, however different from thoſe of the former in every other reſpect, have a wonderful reſemblance to their predeceſſors, in this article of inſenſibility and diſregard of the miſery of others.

CHAP. XXX.

A perfidious Attempt.

AS Zeluco now found more frequent opportunities than ever of being in company with Laura, he continued his aſſiduities with increaſed zeal, and ſtrove by every means of inſinuation with which he was acquainted to gain her good opinion; but with all the pains he took and the art he uſed, her behaviour to him never exceeded the bounds of common politeneſs, and ſometimes a kind of politeneſs which ſavoured a little of diſlike.

Although few men had leſs tenderneſs than Zeluco for the ſelf-love of others, none could feel more exquiſitely when their own was wounded; he perceived Laura's indifference with indignation, and would have endured it with ſtill more impatience, had he not found a balſam to alleviate the ſmart in the very root from whence it ſprang. His vanity, while it made him

feel the indifference of Laura, perſuaded him that ſhe was deficient in penetration, and did not reliſh the graces with which he thought himſelf adorned, as women of taſte uſually did. "*L'amour propre,*" as Rochefoucault finely obſerves, "*empêche bien que celui qui nous flatte ſoit jamais celui qui nous flatte le plus.*" It might be thought that this mean opinion of Laura's taſte would tend to diminiſh the force of his attachment to her; but we muſt remember that Zeluco's love was entirely ſenſual: he thought Laura's face the moſt beautiful, and her perſon the moſt piquant, he had ever ſeen. The qualities of her mind he regarded not.

The attentive and complaiſant manner in which Madame de Seidlits always behaved to him convinced him that he enjoyed *her* good opinion; he perceived alſo, that ſhe had a taſte for ſhow and magnificence, and was a little out of countenance ſometimes on account of the want of thoſe ſuperfluities which cuſtom has rendered almoſt neceſſaries in a certain rank of life.

On

On this weakneſs he founded an opinion, that, with proper management, ſhe might be gradually brought to wink at the connection he wiſhed to form with her daughter; a piece of complaiſance, however ſhocking, which he had already met with in more than one inſtance.

He reſolved therefore to begin his horrid deſign by fixing an obligation of an important nature on her, unknown both to her daughter and Signora Sporza: he waited on her one forenoon when he knew the two other ladies were abroad; and preluding what he had to propoſe with many apologies, he ſaid, That the high eſteem he had for her, and the ſincere concern he took in her intereſt, had prompted him to make ſome inquiry into her circumſtances; and that he was much grieved to find they were ſo ill proportioned to her merit. "As your huſband," continued he, "belonged to another ſervice, I find it will be difficult to have this remedied by the bounty of this court; but you will oblige me infinitely (eſpecially if you will agree

to keep it a ſecret from every other perſon without exception), by permitting me to be your banker for an annual ſum, till ſuch time at leaſt as your own affairs are better arranged." So ſaying, he preſented her with a note of very conſiderable value.

The blood mounted into Madame de Seidlits's face at this propoſal, and ſhe immediately replied, with an air of ſurpriſe and diſpleaſure, That ſhe was ſorry he had taken the trouble of making an inquiry of ſuch a nature; that he had received an erroneous account of her affairs, which were not in a ſituation to juſtify her in accepting aſſiſtance of that kind from any perſon; but more particularly from one with whom ſhe had no natural connection. She added, That ſhe ſhould always have a proper ſenſe of the obligation which, unexpected and unſolicited on her part, he had already conferred on her; but ſhe was determined to be exceedingly cautious of permitting a load to be increaſed which ſhe had already felt too heavy for her

her to bear without great uneaſineſs. Having ſaid this, ſhe withdrew, throwing ſuch a look at Zeluco as his conſcious heart interpreted into a ſuſpicion of his baſe deſign. He remained ſome time fixed to the ſpot, and then returned to his own houſe in much diſturbance of mind.

He was now convinced that he had made a falſe eſtimate of the character of Madame de Seidlits; that he had betrayed his ſcheme on her daughter, and dreaded that he ſhould be deprived of the pleaſure of viſiting her any more, without which he felt he could enjoy little comfort or repoſe.

After much reflection, and after forming and rejecting various plans to remove the effects of this raſh ſtep, and reinſtate himſelf in the good opinion of Madame de Seidlits, he at length ſent her the following letter:

"I AM much afraid, my dear Madam, that I have offended your delicacy by my propoſal this morning, which I am now convinced was made in too abrupt a manner, owing to my having received ſome vexatious

vexatious news of a domeſtic nature, which will oblige me to embark for Meſſina within a few days. Having little expectation of returning to Naples, I graſped too eagerly at the happineſs of ſerving a perſon I ſo highly eſteem, and whom there is reaſon to fear I ſhall never ſee again. I hope you will forgive my precipitate zeal; for however juſt your reaſons may be for rejecting the ſatisfaction aimed at, I hope you will never have any for denying ſome ſhare of your regard to him who is, with the higheſt eſteem, and the warmeſt prayers for your happineſs,

"Madam,

"Your moſt obedient,

"And moſt humble ſervant,

"ZELUCO."

Although Madame de Seidlits's pride had been alarmed by Zeluco's propoſal, ſhe had no ſuſpicion that it was dictated by any baſe motive; and therefore ſhe was not without uneaſineſs even before receiving this letter, leſt ſhe had behaved with too much

much loftineſs to a well-meaning and friendly man. She became entirely of this opinion the moment ſhe peruſed the letter; her candid mind was filled with remorſe for her own behaviour, and ſorrow for his threatened departure.

She directly ſent him a letter, apologizing for her behaviour, and entreated him not to leave Naples without ſeeing her once more.

CHAP. XXXI.

—Tamen ad mores natura recurrit
Damnatos, fixa et mutari neſcia.—
Juv. Sat. xiii. 239.

WHEN Signora Sporza and Laura returned from their airing, Madame de Seidlits informed them, that Zeluco had paid her a viſit, and that he intended to leave Naples. She mentioned this in ſuch a manner that they naturally thought the ſole deſign of his viſit had been to acquaint her with his ſudden departure; this ſhe did to prevent any inquiry concerning the real motive of his viſit, which, in compliance with Zeluco's requeſt, ſhe intended to conceal.

Signora Sporza was greatly ſurpriſed at Zeluco's ſudden reſolution; it appeared unaccountable to her, who was convinced his affections centered at Naples, and did not believe that any buſineſs would appear of

of ſufficient importance in the eyes of a man of his character and fortune, to draw him from the place where his affections were fixed.

Laura was uneaſy becauſe ſhe ſaw her mother ſo; for, independent of that circumſtance, ſhe would have been pleaſed with the departure of a man whoſe company was diſagreeable to her.

The reader needs not be informed that Zeluco had no intention of leaving Naples, and that the ſtory of vexatious news, which obliged him to embark for Sicily, was an invention, calculated to remove all ſuſpicion of his real plan from the mind of Madame de Seidlits, and to convince her, that his propoſal could be dictated by pure benevolence alone; for if, previous to making it, he had already formed the reſolution of quitting Italy, with no view of returning for ſeveral years, and little chance of ever ſeeing her or her daughter again, the offer muſt have been well intended, whether ſhe thought it became her to accept it or not.

But

But it was neceſſary that he ſhould ſeem in earneſt before he ſent the letter to Madame de Seidlits; therefore he announced his intention to the domeſtics of his own family, ordered ſeveral things to be prepared and packed up, called in his debts, ordered inquiry to be made about a proper veſſel for tranſporting him and his ſuite. In ſhort, he acted his part ſo well, that none of his acquaintance, except Signora Sporza, had any doubts of his intention.

When Zeluco received Madame de Seidlits's anſwer to his letter, he began to reſume his old opinions; his mind, habituated to hypocriſy and deceit, could not enter into the natural movements of an honeſt heart, apprehenſive of having acted ungenerouſly, and throbbing with eagerneſs to make reparation; he imagined her anſwer diſplayed an inclination to accept of his offer, and thought her ſtately behaviour had been aſſumed on purpoſe to enhance the value of her future acquieſcence, or perhaps was a temporary triumph, with which the good lady choſe to indulge her vanity;

but having been driven to immediate deciſion by the unexpected news of his departure, ſhe was now ready to capitulate on reaſonable terms.

He did not continue long in this way of thinking; for when he waited on her the following day, and Madame de Seidlits having repeated her apology for the coolneſs of her behaviour at their laſt interview, he began to hint, though in a diſtant way, at a renewal of his former propoſition; but was immediately ſtopt ſhort, by her rejecting it with equal firmneſs, though with leſs anger than at firſt. She added, in the moſt obliging manner, That ſhe had taken the liberty of requeſting to ſee him; becauſe ſhe could not bear the thoughts of his leaving Naples after ſuch a cold interview as their laſt; without expreſſing that ſenſe of gratitude which ſhe ſhould ever retain for his goodneſs to her on a late occaſion, and without wiſhing him a good voyage.

There was ſo much virtuous dignity and unaffected candour and benevolence in the whole

whole of her diſcourſe and deportment, as overawed his inſidious tongue, and checked every preſumptuous hope that began to ſpring up in his breaſt.

At his taking leave, Madame de Seidlits, with ſome degree of ſolemnity and fervour, ſaid, "Heaven direct you, Sir, wherever you go, and bleſs you with all the proſperity and ſucceſs which your diſintereſted conduct and benevolent character deſerve." The conſcience of Zeluco ſmote him at this petition, and he felt a pang ſharp as the ſtiletto of the Portugueſe.

Diſappointed, humbled, and ſelf-condemned, in broken accents, and with a faultering tongue, he was withdrawing, without having the aſſurance once to pronounce the name of Laura, when Signora Sporza and that young lady entered the room; even then he was unable to recover himſelf ſo far as to addreſs them in his uſual manner; after bowing to each, without uttering a word, he hurried out of the room.

His

His agitation ſpoke more powerfully in his favour with Madame de Seidlits, than he could himſelf have done had he been ever ſo cool and recollected; that confuſion which proceeded from diſappointment, perfidy, and conſcious guilt, ſhe imputed to the ſenſibility of a benevolent heart, on being ſeparated from friends, without the hope of ſeeing them again for a long time.

Laura, without being ſo fully convinced of its juſtice, acquieſced in the conſtruction of her mother.

Signora Sporza could not account in a ſatisfactory manner for the behaviour of Zeluco, but ſhe was too much convinced of the ſelfiſhneſs of his diſpoſition, to believe that he could be much affected with any thing unconnected with his own perſonal intereſt or pleaſure.

He was under the neceſſity of continuing the preparations for his departure for ſome days; but on the arrival of the firſt veſſel from Sicily, he pretended that he had received letters, informing him that the buſineſs which required his preſence was

happily and unexpectedly terminated; ſo that his voyage was no longer neceſſary.—This news he allowed to reach the ladies in the common courſe of circulation, fearing that their delicacy might be hurt by his ſending a formal meſſage to acquaint them with it; as that would imply his thinking his motions of more importance to them, than they might incline to have believed; but on his waiting on them a few days after, he was highly pleaſed when Madame de Seidlits chid him for omitting to ſend her a piece of intelligence which gave her much pleaſure. He looked at Laura, in hopes of her ſhewing marks of agreeing with her mother; but as ſhe felt differently, ſhe ſeemed as if ſhe had not heard what her mother had ſaid. Signora Sporza, looking ſlily at Zeluco, ſaid, "I am leſs ſurpriſed than my friend, having all along had a prepoſſeſſion that ſomething would occur to prevent this voyage."

CHAP. XXXII.

The Importance of a Man to himſelf.

ZELUCO was now on a better footing than ever with Madame de Seidlits, viſited her more frequently, and became more and more enamoured of her daughter. The natural graceſulneſs of her manner, the lively good ſenſe of her converſation, and the winning ſweetneſs of her temper, would have attracted the admiration of every man of ſentiment, although theſe qualities had been connected with a face and perſon of the common kind. Even in the eyes of Zeluco, ſunk as he was in ſenſuality and debaſed by vice, the filial affection, the graceful modeſty, and benevolent heart of this amiable young woman, gave additional poignancy to thoſe external beauties which hitherto he had eſteemed as all that is valuable in woman.

From the obſervations which Zeluco had made on the conduct of mankind, confirmed by what paſſed within his own breaſt, his opinion was, that virtue was mere varniſh and pretext; and whatever apparent diſintereſtedneſs, generoſity, or ſelf-denial, there were in the conduct of any perſon, that if the whole could be chymically analyzed and reduced to their original elements, ſelf-intereſt would be found at the bottom of the crucible; he was, beſides, of a ſuſpicious temper, and convinced that, for the moſt of their actions, mankind have ſecret reaſons very different from the oſtenſible. If, therefore, the motive announced was of a generous or diſintereſted nature, he never believed it to be the real one, but turned his eyes in ſearch of a motive where ſelf-intereſt predominated.

In the preſent caſe, not being able to conjecture any advantage that could accrue to Laura, from behaving with ſo much reſerve to him (as to diſliking him, he thought that impoſſible), nor any benefit which

which Madame de Seidlits could derive from rejecting his propoſal, eſpecially as he had annexed no condition to it; he laboured to diſcover what could impel two women who were not devoid of common ſenſe to act in ſuch an irrational manner. And after much deliberate reflexion, he at length imputed the whole of their conduct to a ſcheme concerted between the mother and daughter, with the aid of Signora Sporza, to take advantage of his paſſion for Laura, and, by aſſumed dignity in the one and reſerve in the other, to allure him into a marriage.

Replete with this notion, he determined to be more ſparing in his attentions to Laura, to pay his court with oſtentatious aſſiduity to a young lady of family and conſiderable beauty then at Naples; and by alarming Madame de Seidlits and Laura with jealouſy, and the fear of loſing him for ever, induce them both to more complaiſance.

He acted the part he intended ſo well, that within a ſhort time it was generally

believed at Naples, that a treaty of marriage was on foot between Zeluco and the young lady in queſtion; and he took particular care that Signora Sporza, and her two friends, ſhould have more reaſon than others to be convinced of the truth of this report.

In requital for the pains he gave himſelf in his new aſſumed character, he had the vexation to perceive, that thoſe of all his acquaintance who took the leaſt intereſt in his behaviour, and in the news he had circulated, were preciſely the perſons he wiſhed to affect the moſt; that Madame de Seidlits and Signora Sporza heard and believed it with the moſt perfect indifference, and if there was any alteration obſervable in the behaviour of Laura, it was that ſhe ſeemed a little gayer than formerly.

Finding that a ſtratagem, which he imagined would have greatly diſconcerted the ſuppoſed ſcheme of the ladies, and produced ſomething favourable to his own views, had intirely failed, he now thought proper to relax in his aſſiduities to the young

young lady in queſtion, and renew them to her whom, for ſome time, he ſeemed to have abandoned.

He was the more eager to return to his former ſociety at Signora Sporza's, as he underſtood that Mr. N——, the Engliſh gentleman formerly mentioned, ſpent a great deal of his time with her, and in the company of Madame de Seidlits and Laura. He could hardly indeed allow himſelf to imagine that any woman who had eyes, could prefer this Engliſhman to himſelf; yet, recollecting that the taſtes of women are wonderfully capricious, he felt ſome ſenſations of jealouſy on hearing of the viſits of Mr. N——. Having prepared a plauſible ſtory to account for his late abſence, and what he thought a mighty well-turned apology, he again waited on Madame de Seidlits. He had no opportunity, however, of pronouncing his apology, for as no notice had been taken by Laura, or her relations, of his retreat, the ſame inattention was paid to his return.

He was received as if he had paſſed the preceding evening with them; Signora Sporza ſaying, juſt as he was about to make his apology,—This is lucky enough, as N—— cannot be with us; we were in want of ſomebody to form our party.—Pray, Signor, draw a card.

Baffled in all his plans of ſeduction, his uſual amuſements becoming inſipid, and his former pleaſures nauſeous, feeling himſelf incapable of any enjoyment out of the company of Laura, the obdurate and haughty ſpirit of Zeluco was obliged to relinquiſh every idea of obtaining the object of his wiſhes by, what he called, conqueſt, and to think of propoſing articles of union.

This laſt recourſe was the more mortifying to him, as it was a favourite maxim of his, that no man in his ſenſes would ever think of entering into the ſtate of matrimony, but by the door of wealth, or ambition; yet impelled by deſires which he could not gratify on other terms, he now found

found himſelf obliged to ſue for admiſſion into that ſtate without the attractions of either wealth or ambition.

After a long internal ſtruggle, he at laſt waited on the mother of Laura, and without much ceremony or circumlocution, for he had not the leaſt doubt of ſucceſs, he acquainted her with his honourable intentions reſpecting her daughter. Few things could have been more agreeable to Madame de Seidlits than ſuch a propoſal.

During the firſt violence of her grief and dejection of ſpirits on her huſband's death, ſhe felt the diminution of her fortune as an inconſiderable evil after ſo great a misfortune; but now that the ſharpneſs of her ſorrow was ſomewhat blunted by time, ſhe began to be more ſenſible of the inconveniences and mortifications attendant on narrow circumſtances.

Her huſband, like moſt Germans, was fond of ſhow, and had encouraged his wife in a more expenſive ſtyle of life than he could well afford. She herſelf, in other reſpects of a very amiable character, was

not

not without vanity; ſhe was deſirous that her houſe, furniture, and equipage, ſhould not only be genteel but ſplendid. It is not ſurpriſing, therefore, that the minute œconomy which was abſolutely neceſſary in her preſent circumſtances ſhould be highly diſagreeable to her, even on her own account, but ſtill more ſo on account of her fondneſs for Laura, whom ſhe eagerly wiſhed to ſee poſſeſſed of all the elegancies of life, and for whoſe ſmalleſt pleaſure ſhe was ever ready to ſacrifice any gratification of her own; indeed, all her own gratifications, even thoſe of her vanity, were more ſenſibly enjoyed by her in the perſon of her daughter than in her own.

As Madame de Seidlits foreſaw that Laura's marriage with Zeluco would probably be accompanied with many conveniencies to herſelf, would put her beloved daughter into that ſtate of affluence and ſplendor which ſo well became her, and as Zeluco was a man of whom ſhe had a good opinion, ſhe heartily rejoiced at the propoſal which he made. Having therefore in polite terms thanked him for his good opinion of

her

her daughter, ſhe ſaid ſhe would inform her of his propoſals, and then leave the matter to her own deciſion.

"That is all I wiſh, Madam," ſaid Zeluco.

"For," continued Madame de Seidlits, "Laura's dutiful behaviour gives her a claim to the utmoſt indulgence, and her excellent underſtanding renders it improper for me *ſtrongly* to influence, far leſs to control her on ſuch an occaſion."

"Control!" repeated Zeluco; "have you reaſon to think your daughter's affections are already engaged?"

"I know they are not," ſaid Madame de Seidlits; "had that been the caſe, I ſhould have begun by telling you ſo."

"Then, Madam," ſaid Zeluco, "it is to be hoped there will be no need of control."

Madame de Seidlits was not ſo ſure of Laura's agreeing to Zeluco's propoſal as he ſeemed to be, and therefore had ſpoken in doubtful terms, which he thought unneceſſary, and a little ridiculous.

Having

Having obtained leave to make his propoſals to Laura herſelf, he withdrew, fully convinced that they would be moſt acceptable; but ſomewhat abaſhed, that to arrive at the wiſhed-for goal, he was under the neceſſity of taking the deteſted road of matrimony.

CHAP. XXXIII.

Maternal Affection.—Filial Duty.

THAT very evening Madame de Seidlits took occaſion to mention Zeluco to Laura, in terms agreeable to the good opinion ſhe had formed of him, and the gratitude which ſhe felt for the good office he had done her; and then added, "ſhe was convinced he would make a good huſband."

"Perhaps he might," ſaid Laura, "to a woman who loved him."

"A man of generoſity and worth muſt command the eſteem of a virtuous woman," anſwered Madame de Seidlits; "and that, my dear, is often a ſtronger pledge of happineſs in the married ſtate, than the fantaſtical notions ſome women form of love."

Alarmed at the ſignificant manner with which Madame de Seidlits pronounced this;—Laura, looking earneſtly at her mother, cried,

cried, "Heavens! what does this mean? —has Signor Zeluco—ſurely he cannot think—"

"Yes, Laura," ſaid Madame de Seidlits, "he thinks of you, and you only;—and this day he offered to make you miſtreſs of his hand and fortune."

The blood immediately forſook Laura's face; ſhe became as pale as ſnow, and ſeemed ready to faint.

"My deareſt child," exclaimed Madame de Seidlits; "what is the matter?"

"Oh! mother," ſaid Laura, in a feeble voice, "will you give me to a man I cannot love?—will you order your Laura—?"

"How can you talk ſo, child," ſaid the mother; "when did I order you?"

"Alas!" ſaid Laura, "is not every indication of your wiſhes obeyed as an order by me?"

"For which reaſon," replied Madame de Seidlits, "I have no wiſhes but thoſe which you can with pleaſure obey."

"It has been the happineſs of my life," ſaid Laura, "to obey,—to anticipate your wiſhes, when it was in my power; but can you

you wiſh me married to a man whom I cannot love? or would you make ſuch a requital to the perſon who has obliged you, as to give him a wife without fortune, and without the leaſt affection, without even—"

"For Heaven's ſake, my dear, do not talk in that manner," interrupted Madame de Seidlits; "you well know, I can deſire nothing but what is for your good; but I beg you may hear me calmly, your deciſion on this matter is of great importance: you muſt be ſenſible of the ſad reverſe of fortune which has befallen you by the death of your father; his riſing proſpects in the army, his generous ſpirit, and above all his love for us both, have accuſtomed you to a ſtyle of life very different from what our preſent circumſtances can ſupport. In the mean-while, Signor Zeluco, a man of a friendly and benevolent character, and of a vaſt fortune, offers you his hand, and is ready to reſcue you from all the inconveniencies of poverty, and to place you in a ſtate of affluence which you never before expe-

experienced. But you ſay, you do not love him.—Well, if that continues to be the caſe, there is no more to be ſaid; I ſhall never deſire you to give your hand to a man whom you cannot love;—but I fear, my dear, you are miſled by falſe and romantic notions on that head."

"Is there any thing unreaſonable or romantic," ſaid Laura, "in refuſing my hand to a man who in no degree intereſts my heart. But you have alluded to the inconveniencies of our preſent confined circumſtances,—as affecting *me* in a more *particular* manner. I know not," continued Laura, "if I underſtood my mother right?"

"The narrowneſs of our circumſtances are a ſource of unhappineſs to me *on your account only*," replied Madame de Seidlits.

"From this moment then, my dear Madam, let that ſource be dried up," ſaid Laura; "for our preſent circumſtances, confined as they are, give me no uneaſineſs: and be aſſured, that if you can bear them cheerfully, all the inconveniencies attending

ing them are bliſs to me, in compariſon with affluence as the wife of Zeluco."

"Well, my deareſt girl, I have done; you have ſaid enough, and more than enough;—you ſhall never again hear him mentioned as a lover by me."

"My dear mother," cried Laura, with tears of affection, "how can I requite you for this goodneſs?"

"By following the dictates of your own virtuous heart," ſaid Madame de Seidlits; "be you happy, my dear child, and I am contented."

"I *am* happy!" exclaimed Laura, throwing her arms around her mother's neck; "how can I be but happy while I am bleſſed with ſuch a parent?"

Madame de Seidlits then informed her daughter, that Zeluco had deſired to have an audience of her by himſelf, in which he would make his propoſals; which ſhe had agreed to.

Laura begged with earneſtneſs, that her mother would take on herſelf the office of acquainting Zeluco with her determined

ſentiments. But Madame de Seidlits urged her promiſe, and that Zeluco might conſider himſelf as diſreſpectfully uſed, adding, with a ſmile, You muſt allow me, my dear, to carry *one* point in this negotiation. Laura acquieſced, and next morning muſtered up all her reſolution for a ſcene which ſhe thought on with a good deal of uneaſineſs.

CHAP. XXXIV.

Si on croit aimer ſa maitreſſe pour l'amour d'elle on eſt bien trompé. ROCHEFOUCAULT.

ZELUCO called at Madame de Seidlits's the day following: after he had waited a few minutes alone, Laura entered the room pale and in evident emotion, without looking him in the face, pointed to a chair, and deſired him to be ſeated, placing herſelf at the ſame time at a reſpectful diſtance.

"No doubt," ſaid he, "your mother has informed you, Madam, of the ſentiments with which your beauty and merit have inſpired me, and with the purport of this viſit."

"She has, Sir," ſaid Laura, "and I am ſenſible of the honour your good opinion does me; the obligation you conferred on my mother demands, and has my warmeſt gratitude;—but—"

Zeluco, conſtruing Laura's confuſion in his own favour, ſtepped acroſs the room, ſeized her ſhrinking hand, and exclaimed, "Talk not of gratitude for trifles, my whole fortune is now at your diſpoſal; and you will, I hope, name an early day that the rites of the church may unite us for ever."

The ſecurity implied in this abrupt addreſs offended the delicacy and rouſed the ſpirits of Laura; ſhe diſengaged her hand, and throwing an indignant look at Zeluco, ſaid, "Carry your fortune, Sir, to ſome woman more deſirous and more deſerving of it; I have claim to ſhare it with you on neither account."

Zeluco, ſurpriſed and piqued at her manner, anſwered, "I am ſorry you ſeem offended, Madam; I hope there is nothing in the propoſal I have made to hurt your pride."

"Without giving grounds for an accuſation of pride," replied Laura, "I may be ſurpriſed at being preſſed to fix a day for a purpoſe I never agreed to, and never ſhall."

"I under-

"I underſtood, Madam, that your mother had been ſo obliging as to explain my ſentiments and plead my cauſe; having her approbation, I flattered myſelf I ſhould have yours, and that you would be willing to abridge unneceſſary delay.

"My mother, Sir, has a warm and grateful heart, and is penetrated with a ſenſe of your ſervices on a late occaſion; I hope I alſo have becoming ſentiments on that head, of which the beſt proof I can give, is by aſſuring you at once, that it is not in my power to repay the partiality you expreſs for me in the manner you deſire. I hope, therefore, you will here terminate a purſuit which muſt be vain, and is ſo little worth your while."

"I was informed, Madam," ſaid Zeluco, "that your heart was diſengaged."

"You were informed rightly," ſaid Laura.

"What then are your *objections* to me?" ſaid he.

"Since the reaſons which determine me," ſaid Laura, "ſeem valid to thoſe to

whom I think myſelf accountable, I muſt be excuſed from an explanation to any other perſon."

The poſſibility of his honourable propoſals being rejected, had never once entered into the contemplation of Zeluco; on the contrary, he was convinced that all her former reſerve was aſſumed for no other purpoſe but to allure him to this point; on finding them refuſed in ſo decided a manner, his heart ſwelled with anger, which he could with difficulty ſuppreſs.

Laura, perceiving the ſtruggle, added, "I do not mean to offend you, Sir; but I think it my duty, on ſuch an occaſion, to aſſure you, that my determination is unalterable. I ſincerely wiſh you happineſs with a more deſerving woman."

"You are infinitely obliging, Madam," ſaid he, his eyes flaſhing with rage.

"I muſt beg to be excuſed from attending you any longer," ſaid ſhe, retiring with ſome degree of precipitation.

She was no ſooner gone, than Zeluco ſtruck his clenched fiſt twice, with frantic violence,

violence, on his forehead, and ruſhed out of the houſe, before Madame de Seidlits, who meant to have waited on him, had time to reach the room.

The grateful heart of this well-diſpoſed lady was hurt when ſhe underſtood that Zeluco had left her houſe in ſo much diſpleaſure; and even after hearing her daughter's account of the ſcene which had paſſed between them, ſhe thought that Laura ought to have ſoftened her refuſal, and bore more calmly thoſe ſigns of vexation and diſappointment which Zeluco had diſplayed; "Which, after all, my dear," added Madame de Seidlits, "are proofs of his love."

"They might have been miſtaken for marks of hatred," ſaid Laura, "and could not have been more diſagreeable to me had I known them to be really ſuch."

When Zeluco returned to his own houſe, he poured out a thouſand execrations againſt the ſex in general, and the pride and folly of Laura in particular; abuſed

his ſervants, and diſplayed many of thoſe ridiculous extravagances, which wounded vanity and diſappointment prompt men of peeviſh and paſſionate tempers to exhibit. But after having ſworn, raged, ſtamped, bounced and blaſphemed for two hours together, he recollected at laſt, what was very obvious from the firſt, that theſe extravagances would not bring him nearer his object; the fermentation excited by this unexpected diſappointment ſettled in a gloomy reſerve, during which he avoided ſociety, and paſſed great part of his time in meditating ſome ſcheme for getting Laura into his power, that he might at once ſatisfy his deſires and his revenge.

He once thought of cauſing her to be ſeized, forced aboard a veſſel, and of paſſing over with her to Tunis. And he had ſome converſation with a bold enterpriſing fellow, who commanded a trading veſſel, then at Naples, was well acquainted with the Barbary coaſt, and had lived a conſiderable time at Tunis; this man, Zeluco had firſt become acquainted with at Palermo, and had

had taken great pleaſure in liſtening to his adventures. He ſent for him on the preſent occaſion, and, ſtating a caſe from which the ſeaman could not gueſs at the ſcheme he meditated, he ſounded him with reſpect to the practicability of ſome ſuch plan.

But, while his mind was agitated with this villanous project, he occaſionally viſited Madame de Seidlits; who, by the complacency of her behaviour to him, endeavoured, as much as lay in her power, to compenſate for that of Laura, which ſhe could not help thinking had been too harſh to a perſon who had conducted himſelf in ſo obliging a manner to them both. And ſhe made no ſcruple of declaring to him, that ſhe would have been better pleaſed that Laura had liſtened more favourably to his ſuit; which poſſibly might be the caſe at ſome future period. She adviſed him, however, not to urge her farther at preſent; adding, That ſhe ſhould acquaint him as ſoon as ſhe perceived any change in the ſentiments of Laura in his favour.

This

This diſcourſe of Madame de Seidlits tended to turn the mind of Zeluco from the mad and vindictive projects with which it was occupied, the difficulties and danger of which alſo became more apparent to himſelf as he cooled.

But ſtill feeling himſelf in an awkward and mortified ſituation, and unable to ſuppreſs the over-boilings of wrath and indignation at the ſight of Laura, he determined on making another tour through Italy, and perhaps through France, in the hopes that a variety of objects would diſſipate his vexation from the conſtant contemplation of one. When he arrived at Rome, he endeavoured to extinguiſh a paſſion which gave him unremitting pain, by plunging into that current of diſſipation and debauchery from which he had of late abſtained. This expedient had no better effect than his rage, execrations, and blaſphemy had formerly produced. Invited to every ſplendid aſſembly and magnificent entertainment, indulging every gratification of ſenſe, he *ſeemed* to be paſſing his days in

joy, and his nights in pleaſure; but was in reality the victim of chagrin and of diſguſt. His paſſion appeared to gain freſh force from the efforts made to ſubdue it; and the lovely form of the virtuous Laura, ever preſent in his mind, obſcured even in his vitiated imagination all the allurements of thoſe meretricious charms by which he endeavoured to efface it.

Unable to purſue his original plan, or to ſupport a longer abſence from Laura, after pouring out a freſh torrent of execrations againſt her, he ſent an apology to the Cardinal B——, with whom he was engaged to dine, ordered poſt-horſes, and returned to Naples with the rapidity of a courier.

Madame de Seidlits received him with her uſual politeneſs, but gave no hint of any change of ſentiment on the part of Laura. He had the additional mortification, in a ſhort time, to find, that though the mother ſeldom allowed herſelf to be denied when he called, yet it frequently happened that

that Laura did not appear during the whole of his viſit.

While Zeluco's aim was ſeduction, all that he had expected from Signora Sporza was connivance; when he was afterwards driven to the reſolution of making propoſals of marriage, he conſidered her mediation as unneceſſary, being fully convinced that his terms would be accepted as ſoon as made. Diſappointed in both his plans, and exceſſively galled at Laura's not appearing when he viſited her mother, he again had recourſe to Signora Sporza, ſpoke highly of his admiration of her young friend, and ended a very pathetic harangue, by ſwearing, That his paſſion was, and had ever been, of the pureſt and moſt honourable nature.

"Of what other could it be, Signor?" ſaid ſhe. "Could any body ſuſpect you wicked enough to attempt an affair of gallantry with a woman of birth, who is unmarried?"

He agreed that nothing could be more horrid than ſuch an attempt; but that he had

had offered her his hand and fortune in the moſt reſpectful manner, which, to his great ſurpriſe and vexation, ſhe had rejected.

"It is natural," replied Signora Sporza, "that you ſhould be vexed on ſuch an occaſion; but there are ſo many inſtances of women refuſing men who offer to marry them, that I ſee no reaſon for your being greatly ſurpriſed." It was with difficulty that Zeluco could conceal the anger which glowed in his breaſt at this obſervation of Signora Sporza; after a ſhort pauſe, however, he ſaid, There was reaſon to fear that Laura had conceived a prejudice againſt him; and entreated of Signora Sporza, with whom he knew that Laura was quite confidential, to adviſe him what was the beſt method of removing this prejudice, and rendering her more favourable to his wiſhes.

"I know of no qualities," replied Signora Sporza, "by which a man has a greater chance of making a favourable impreſſion on the mind of Laura, than by ſincerity, good temper, and benevolence; and were I

to

to offer an advice, it would be, that you ſhould rely on theſe, and theſe only."

Although Signora Sporza pronounced this with a ſerious countenance, the irony did not eſcape the obſervation of Zeluco: without ſeeming to take notice of it, he laid it up in his memory, and thanked her for her good counſel; adding, That he was ſorry to perceive that Laura ſeldom appeared when he viſited Madame de Seidlits; that probably this happened from her ſuſpecting that he would renew his ſuit; he begged that Signora Sporza would aſſure her, that he intended not to teaſe her with ſolicitations; but that he earneſtly wiſhed for the happineſs of being received by Madame de Seidlits on the general footing of a friend: which he could not think was the caſe, when any of her family thought themſelves obliged to be abſent when he viſited her.

Signora Sporza was ſo pleaſed with the apparent reaſonableneſs and humility of this requeſt, that the rancour and indignation which lurked in the breaſt of him who made

made it, entirely eluded her notice. She promiſed to acquaint her friends with what he had ſaid; and the following day ſent Zeluco an invitation to meet them both at her houſe.

Madame de Seidlits joined with Signora Sporza in repreſenting to Laura, that there was no neceſſity for her behaving with peculiar reſerve to Zeluco after the declaration he had made; and ſhe agreed to behave as they required, without arguing the point; although ſhe would have been infinitely better pleaſed to have kept herſelf ſecluded from the company of Zeluco.

Zeluco now had frequent opportunities of being in company with the object of his wiſhes. He paſſed whole evenings with the mother and daughter, attentively ſtudied the characters of both, and endeavoured to adapt his behaviour, and every ſentiment he uttered, to what he thought would pleaſe them moſt; and notwithſtanding the reſtraint to which this obliged him to ſubmit, he had, on the whole, a ſenſation in their company

company more agreeable than in any other ſociety however jovial or voluptuous. And had not his own character been intrinſically vicious, the continuation of the ſelf-command he was thus obliged to aſſume, and the efforts he made to pleaſe, might, perhaps have effected a favourable change in his own diſpoſition. For nothing is more powerful in alluring the heart of man to virtue, than the ſociety of amiable, accompliſhed, and virtuous women.

CHAP. XXXV.

——Novas artes, nova pectore vèrſat
Concilia.—— VIRG.

IT was already remarked, that a portion of vanity formed part of the character of Madame de Seidlits, and ſometimes obſcured the luſtre of her beſt qualities; ſhe was apt too frequently in converſation to introduce the names of perſons of very high rank, with whom her huſband had been intimate in Germany, and who had occaſionally viſited her when ſhe reſided in that country. She paid a minute attention to the ornaments of her perſon, and ſometimes adopted a ſtyle of dreſs which ſuited her better at an earlier period of her life. Having been diſtinguiſhed for beauty in her youth, of which there were ſome remains, ſhe ſeemed more pleaſed with the ſhare which ſhe ſtill retained, than ſenſible

that far the larger portion was fled. This error in calculation many women fall into who have not the good qualities of Madame de Seidlits to compenſate it; for her general deportment was genteel and elegant, her temper cheerful and complacent, her diſpoſition benevolent and generous.

In Laura Zeluco obſerved a depth of reflection and ſolidity of underſtanding, which he thought incompatible with her ſex, and is very uncommon at her age. This was joined to an elegant ſimplicity of manner, and a total want of affectation, equally uncommon; ever ready to remark, and fond of diſplaying, the accompliſhments of others, ſhe ſeemed inſenſible of thoſe with which ſhe herſelf was ſo eminently adorned.

No daughter ever had a ſtronger ſenſe than Laura of what ſhe owed to her mother; the affectionate care and ſolicitude with which Madame de Seidlits had watched over her infancy, and the unceaſing attention ſhe beſtowed on her through life, were, in the mind of this young lady,

obliga-

obligations never to be repaid; and independent of all ſenſe of obligation or filial duty, ſhe had a high eſteem for her mother's perſonal qualities. Neither gratitude nor eſteem, however, prevented her ſeeing the weakneſſes above enumerated: her clearneſs of ſight was to her, in this particular, a ſource of uneaſineſs: and if ſhe ſuſpected any other perſon of being equally clear-ſighted, ſhe could not help feeling a temporary diſlike to that perſon. As often as any of the little failings above enumerated began to make their appearance, ſhe endeavoured, with all the addreſs in her power, to turn away the attention of the company, and with theirs, ſhe would have been glad had it been in her power to have turned away her own.

But it was her happineſs to reflect upon, and her delight to diſplay, every graceful and good quality that belonged to her mother. Eaſy even to indifference about the common forms of reſpect when they regarded herſelf, ſhe had a jealous ſenſibi-

lity of the ſmalleſt neglect or want of attention to her mother.

Zeluco remarked this peculiarity in the character of Laura; he ſaw that the compliments he ſometimes ventured to pay to herſelf were always heard with indifference, and ſometimes with diſguſt, while every juſt and well-founded compliment paid to her mother ſeemed to give pleaſure to the daughter: declining, therefore, the beaten road of inſinuation, he tried to gain acceſs to the heart of the one by the praiſes he beſtowed on the other.

It behoved him, however, to be on his guard, in what manner, and on what occaſion, he riſked his compliments; it was neceſſary that they ſhould ſeem at once juſt and *à-propos*. He once miſtook his aim ſo far as to compliment Madame de Seidlitz for a quality ſhe certainly did *not* poſſeſs, and was inſtantly warned of his error by ſuch a glance of indignation from the expreſſive eye of Laura, as prevented his ever repeating it.

But

But as often as, on proper occaſions, he remarked with juſtice and delicacy on the good and amiable qualities that *really* belonged to Madame de Seidlits, which he frequently did with equal penetration and addreſs, it was evident that Laura liſtened with looks of more complacency than ſhe ever diſplayed when he ſpoke on any other ſubject. He acquired by ſtudy and uſe ſuch a maſterly manner of dwelling on this favourite theme, that Laura's averſion began to diminiſh; and ſhe could not help feeling ſentiments of approbation and good-will to the perſon who furniſhed her with ſo ſweet a ſource of enjoyment.

This alteration in the ſentiments of Laura was obſerved with more pleaſure by her mother than by Signora Sporza, whoſe eſteem for Laura and her diſlike of Zeluco had increaſed with her acquaintance with both. Her diſlike of the latter, however, did not proceed entirely from her own penetration; ſhe had received ſuch an account of him from a female correſpondent at Palermo, as confirmed and greatly aug-

mented her original ill opinion, and made her averſe to the idea of his ever becoming the huſband of her young friend, notwithſtanding the temptation in point of fortune for ſuch an alliance. But being convinced that her mentioning her ſentiments on this ſubject to the mother or daughter, would prevent their ever again having any connexion with Zeluco, ſhe therefore was ſilent; at the ſame time determined, if it ſhould be neceſſary, to ſpeak in ſufficient time.

But although Signora Sporza concealed from Madame de Seidlits and her daughter the opinion ſhe had of Zeluco, her real ſentiments were detected by the jealous and penetrating eyes of the man himſelf. There is perhaps no ſentiment which it is ſo difficult to conceal from the perſon who is the object of it, as violent hatred: a moderate adept in the art of diſſimulation may impoſe on thoſe for whom he feels no eſteem, or whom he even holds in contempt; and, if he has an intereſt in it, may perſuade them that he has a high reſpect

ſpect or even veneration for them; this, in ſome meaſure, accounts for ſo many people of the higheſt rank being ignorant of the true rate at which they are eſtimated. For the indications of contempt are eaſily reſtrained, and thoſe of admiration as eaſily aſſumed; but it requires the powers of a finiſhed hypocrite to hide hatred or averſion. Such ſtrong feelings it is difficult to controul, and prevent their diſcovering themſelves by ſome involuntary appearance in the countenance or manner. It is not ſurpriſing, therefore, that Zeluco became fully convinced that Signora Sporza had a very unfavourable opinion of him, and was averſe to his ever ſucceeding with Laura. The rancour which gathered in his breaſt on this diſcovery, was of the moſt deadly kind; but he endeavoured to hide it till he ſhould find a proper occaſion of giving it vent; and being, notwithſtanding her ſex, a better diſſembler than Signora Sporza, he for a long time ſucceeded.

CHAP. XXXVI.

Full oft by holy feet our ground was trod,
Of clerks good plenty here you mote eſpy.
A little, round, fat, oily man of God,
Was one I chiefly mark'd among the fry:
He had a roguiſh twinkle in his eye,
And ſhone all glittering with ungodly dew,
If a tight damſel chaunc'd to trippen by;
Which when obſerv'd, he ſhrunk into his mew,
And ſtraight would recollect his piety anew.

THOMSON.

ALTHOUGH Zeluco perceived with pleaſure the change which had taken place in Laura's behaviour to him, he did not chuſe to rely entirely on his own addreſs; but as he now believed that he had no aid to expect from Signora Sporza, he reſolved to ſeek other allies, and even attempted to draw them from the church itſelf; a quarter in which one would think he had little intereſt.

Father Mulo was an eccleſiaſtic, more remarkable for the rigidity of his manners and

and opinions, than the depth of his intellects.—Father Pedro was a monk of a different order, indulgent in his diſpoſition, agreeable in converſation, naturally ſhrewd, and what piety he poſſeſſed was far from being of a moroſe kind. He had adopted the eccleſiaſtical profeſſion from neceſſity not inclination, and he endeavoured to aſſume an air of gravity and ſelf-denial, which was equally diſcordant with the turn of his mind, the rotundity of his perſon, and to his roſy complexion, all of which announced him *Epicuri de grege porcus.* The warmth of Father Pedro's conſtitution had formerly drawn him into ſome ſcrapes from which it required all his addreſs to diſengage himſelf, and rendered him exceedingly cautious ever after. He had behaved with peculiar circumſpection ever ſince he had been at Naples; and being a man of more underſtanding than moſt of his brethren, he was choſen by Signora Sporza as her father confeſſor, and through her recommendation he now acted in the ſame capacity to her two friends, in preference to Father Mulo, who

who was their relation. In a ſhort time, Father Pedro, whoſe manners were gentle and inſinuating, gained the entire confidence of Madame de Seidlits, and was rather well thought of by her daughter. Father Mulo was by no means pleaſed with the choice his relations had made, yet as they behaved to him in all other reſpects with much deference and attention, no open breach took place between the Father and any of them on this account.

Zeluco having informed himſelf of the character of thoſe two monks, and knowing their connection with Madame de Seidlits, he thought it might be of importance to gain them to his intereſt.

He began with Father Pedro, whoſe favour he endeavoured to acquire by all the addreſs and powers of inſinuation he was maſter of, ſetting out by chuſing him for his ghoſtly father; and to the gentle pennance which he enjoined for the venial faults which Zeluco thought it expedient to confeſs, he frequently impoſed upon himſelf a mulct in money, which he delivered into

into the hands of the Father, to be applied to whatever pious uſe he thought proper.

This behaviour on the part of Zeluco gave great ſatisfaction to Father Pedro, who not only received his viſits with pleaſure at his convent, but more frequently waited upon him at Zeluco's houſe.

After a pretty free repaſt, during which the Father diſplayed much good humour and jovialneſs, Zeluco ſeizing what he thought a lucky moment, informed him of his paſſion for Laura.

This ghoſtly Father aſſuredly had never imagined, that the ſudden veneration which Zeluco profeſſed for him, proceeded either from an admiration of his character or countenance; on the contrary, he had all along ſuſpected its real ſource. He was not a man of very great delicacy of ſentiment, and certainly was not troubled with prejudices of a ſuperſtitious nature; yet there were occaſions on which he thought it expedient to affect as much terror for the horns of Satan as his brother Mulo was really impreſſed with. Zeluco had no ſooner

mentioned his paſſion for Laura; than the Monk ſtarted as if a culverin had unexpectedly exploded at his ear, diſplaying as much aſtoniſhment and horror in his countenance, as if the devil had appeared before him in full uniform, with his cloven feet, longeſt tail, and largeſt pair of horns.

"What is the matter with you, my good Father?" ſaid Zeluco; "do you perceive any thing unnatural or extraordinary in my deſiring to be united in holy wedlock with a virtuous and beautiful young lady?"

The Father, although he had long perceived Zeluco's fondneſs for Laura, had never heard of his propoſing marriage to her, nor had he any idea that ſuch was his intention. When Zeluco mentioned his love, the Father took it for granted that he was about to requeſt his aid on a different ſyſtem; but finding that he really intended marriage, the Monk began to imagine that he had played off his pantomime a little inadvertently, and was at a loſs how to give a plauſible account of his own affected ſurpriſe; he endeavoured to colour it, however,

ever, as well as he could, by ſaying, That as his buſineſs with Zeluco was of a ſpiritual nature, he could not help being very much ſurpriſed at the mention of a thing ſo different from what he was accuſtomed to have any concern in.

"I do humbly hope, my worthy Father," ſaid Zeluco, "that you will think you have a natural concern in this, as I can aſſure you my happineſs not only in this world, but very poſſibly in the next, depends on my being able to prevail on this young lady to accept of my hand; for my heart is ſo fixed upon her, that I do not know what deſperate meaſures I may be drove to if ſhe continues obſtinately to refuſe me."

The Monk ſeemed to ſoften by degrees; Zeluco gave him a full account of the propoſals he had made, the ſettlements he had offered, Laura's unaccountable obſtinacy; concluding by informing the Monk, that he had laid apart a ſum of money which, in caſe of ſucceſs in his honourable propoſals, he would requeſt the Father to accept,

cept, and appropriate to whatever pious or uſeful purpoſe he thought moſt expedient; but on this expreſs condition, that it ſhould remain an everlaſting ſecret to all the reſt of the world; "becauſe," added he, "an oſtentatious diſplay of ſuch donations deſtroys, in my opinion, any little merit there may be in making them."

The Father agreed to this laſt condition with ſome ſeeming difficulty, praiſed Zeluco's modeſty and charitable diſpoſition, and finally aſſured him of all the aſſiſtance in his power. "In the firſt place," ſaid he, "I will uſe my influence out of friendſhip to you: ſecondly, from the regard I have for Madame de Seidlits and the young lady herſelf, who ſo perverſely oppoſes her own happineſs; and laſtly, and above all, I will uſe my intereſt in your favour for the ſake of religion and the poor, as both muſt be benefited by the ſucceſs of your honourable views."

This Eccleſiaſtic, partly from probity and partly from prudence, would have rejected a bribe to aſſiſt in any project which he thought

thought wicked or unlawful, but he had no ſcruple in allowing himſelf to be well rewarded for doing what he approved, and would, of himſelf, have been happy to promote without any bribe at all.

Indeed he had no notion that Madame de Seidlits, or her daughter, had a ſerious intention of ſtanding out againſt a match which he thought ſo advantageous for both. He imputed their refuſal to affectation, caprice, or a deſire of indulging a few feminine airs; and he had a meaner opinion of Zeluco's underſtanding, on account of his being in this manner the dupe of a little female vanity.

And ſo impatient was he, that the *poor* ſhould reap the fruits of Zeluco's promiſed liberality, that the firſt time he found Madame de Seidlits alone, he expreſſed much ſurpriſe that ſhe had never told him of Zeluco's addreſſes to her daughter.

Madame de Seidlits replied, That after Laura had given her negative, ſhe thought it beſt not to mention a ſubject which might

might be diſagreeable to Signor Zeluco, and was ſo foreign to thoſe in which the Father was uſually employed.

"It is true," replied Pedro, "I am principally intereſted in your ſpiritual concerns, but by no means indifferent to the temporal welfare of your family."

Madame de Seidlits then informed him of all the particulars.

"I have ſuch an opinion of Signora Laura's filial duty and affection," ſaid Pedro, "that I am convinced, if you were to preſs this matter earneſtly upon her, ſhe would conſent."

"It is not impoſſible but ſhe might," ſaid Madame de Seidlits, "for which reaſon I ſhall be particularly careful not to preſs her."

Father Pedro expreſſed aſtoniſhment at her taking ſo little concern in an affair of ſuch importance to her daughter's happineſs.

"It is becauſe it is of ſo much importance to her happineſs that I leave it to her own judgment," ſaid Madame de Seidlits;

"Laura

"Laura is endowed with prudence and good ſenſe, and ſhe is certainly the beſt judge of her own feelings; if Zeluco ever becomes more agreeable to her, importunity would be ſuperfluous; and if he does not, it would be cruel: beſides, I have given her my word never to urge her on the ſubject, and I will aſſuredly adhere to my engagement."

CHAP. XXXVII.

For he a rope of ſand could twiſt,
As tough as learned Sorboniſt,
And weave fine cobwebs, fit for ſcull
That's empty when the moon is full;
Such as take lodgings in a head
That's to be let unfurniſhed. BUTLER.

THE Father was prevented from reply, by Laura's entering the room with Father Mulo. Before any account is given of the converſation which this venerable man introduced, it is neceſſary to throw a retroſpective glance on incidents which occurred long before; from this an idea may be formed of the characters of Colonel Seidlits, and others, connected with our purpoſe.

Without recapitulating the circumſtances by which the Colonel and his lady became firſt acquainted, it is ſufficient to obſerve, that their marriage took place before the Father

Father knew any thing of the matter; but he expreſſed infinite concern, and probably felt ſome, on hearing that his relation was the wife of a heretic. When ſhe went with her huſband to Germany, the zealous Father continued from time to time to remind her in his letters, of the dangers ſhe incurred in a land of hereſy, and furniſhed her with the beſt arguments he had at his diſpoſal, to enable her to adhere to the religion in which ſhe was bred, ſtimulating her at the ſame time to attempt the converſion of her huſband, by which ſhe would acquire immortal glory, effect her huſband's ſalvation, and ſecure to herſelf the comfort of his company both in this life and that which is to come.

The Father being infinitely delighted with both the ſtyle and argments of thoſe letters, he could not deny himſelf the gratification of ſhewing copies of them to ſeveral of his acquaintance, and as the intention of ſhewing them could not be miſtaken, his acquaintance in general were good-natured enough to praiſe them to the

Monk's contentment; one old maiden aunt of Madame de Seidlits's, however, whoſe zeal for religion and hatred to heretics increaſed with her years, ſeemed to approve of the correſpondence leſs than any other perſon to whoſe inſpection he had ſubmitted it. When Father Mulo hinted this to her, ſhe told him, that ſhe was ſo provoked at the odious heretic who had ſeduced her niece, that it was not in her power to wiſh in earneſt for his converſion, for ſhe could not bear even to hear his name mentioned; and ſhe was very certain ſhe ſhould faint at the ſight of him whenever ſhe met him, were it even in Heaven.

But the Father had too much ardour for making converts, to follow the ſuggeſtions of this virgin; he therefore continued to tranſmit ſuch morſels of eloquence as, in his opinion, could not fail to operate the converſion of Colonel Seidlits.

But the reverend Father's zeal being far more conſpicuous than his arguments were convincing, Madame de Seidlits never thought proper to communicate them to

her huſband; while he, on his part, left his lady, without moleſtation, in the full enjoyment of her religious opinions, and at perfect liberty to worſhip God in the manner which her conſcience approved. This he had promiſed when he married her, and he would have thought it inconſiſtent with honour to have tried to bring her over to his own perſuaſion, even although he had been certain of ſucceeding. The Colonel has been blamed for this by many zealous Proteſtants; we do not mean to approve or cenſure his conduct in this particular, but only mention the fact, leaving it to better judges to decide whether he was blame-worthy or not.

Madame de Seidlits herſelf, who was pleaſed with all her huſband's behaviour to her, was peculiarly delighted with what ſhe called his delicacy in this point; and when Father Mulo inſiſted peremptorily in one of his letters, on knowing whether ſhe had ever made any attempt to convert her huſband, or had ſhewn him the forcible reaſoning contained in his letters to

her; ſhe was obliged to acknowledge that ſhe had done neither, and gave for her reaſon, that her huſband having left her at liberty on the ſubject of religion, ſhe thought it would be a bad requital in her to teaſe him.

Father Mulo, in anſwer, endeavoured to demonſtrate the weakneſs of that argument. It is not neceſſary to tranſcribe the whole of the Father's letter; the following paragraph will, in all probability, be thought ſufficient:

"It was natural enough in you, my dear Madam, to apprehend that your own arguments would be too feeble to convince your huſband; but it is ſurpriſing that you do not perceive, that thoſe I provided you with are of a very different nature; indeed, they are ſuch as ſeldom fail to perſuade even the weakeſt minds. From this you may judge what impreſſion they would make on a perſon of ſuch good ſenſe as you deſcribe your huſband to be.

"You ſay, that it would be improper in you to teaſe *him*, becauſe he never attempts

to

to diſturb *you*, nor allows any other perſon to trouble you on the ſubject of religion: but you do not diſtinguiſh, my dear Madam, the great difference between the two caſes. For your huſband, indeed, to make any attempt, or to allow any to be made by others, for the purpoſe of ſeducing you from your religion to his, would not only be improper, but alſo highly criminal, and for this very ſufficient reaſon, *becauſe it is criminal to draw any perſon whatever from truth to falſehood.* But for you to labour, without ceaſing, to prevail on your deluded huſband to abjure his own faith and adopt yours, is in the higheſt degree meritorious; *becauſe it is highly meritorious to lead any perſon whatever, and far more a beloved huſband, from falſehood to truth, or from darkneſs to light.*

" After having cleared up this point, I have only juſt to hint, that inſtead of reaſoning upon what I inform you it is your duty to do, your ſafeſt courſe, my deareſt couſin, will, for the future, be to perform it implicitly, for reaſoning is by

no means what you ſhine in: and, although you are generally allowed to be endowed with very good common ſenſe, and ſufficient underſtanding to conduct common affairs; take my word for it, your immortal ſoul is of too much conſequence to be entruſted in your own hands."

This remonſtrance had not the effect which, in Father Mulo's opinion, ſuch forcible reaſoning and ſuch rational requeſts ought to have produced. What contributed, perhaps, to render Madame de Seidlits the more unwilling to touch on ſuch ſubjects, was an incident of which ſhe was informed about the very time when the Monk was urging her ſo earneſtly.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

No ſooner could a hint appear,
But up he ſtarted to picqueer,
And made the ſtouteſt yield to mercy,
When he engaged in controverſy,
Not by the force of carnal reaſon,
But indefatigable teazing. BUTLER.

A Young Proteſtant clergyman, a diſtant relation of Colonel de Seidlits, came about this time to Berlin. He had applied himſelf with ardour to the ſtudy of controverſy. He was diſtinguiſhed by his wonderful faculty of creating diſputes where they were leaſt expected, and by his invincible courage in maintaining them when begun: he often aſſerted, and with truth, that he had never yielded an argument in his life. He was greatly admired for the flow of his pulpit eloquence, and the force of his reaſoning, by all who were previouſly of his own opinion. The longer this

this happy eccleſiaſtic lived, he ſeemed to be the more confirmed in the favourable impreſſion which, from his boyiſh years, he entertained of his own talents, and in his contempt for thoſe of others; and became at length ſo powerful in ſelf-conceit, that he would, without heſitation, have engaged a whole conclave of his adverſaries, being convinced not only that he could overturn all their arguments, but that the prejudices of education, the conſiderations of intereſt, and the allurements of ambition, muſt all yield to the irreſiſtible ſtrength of his demonſtration.

This gentleman was ſometimes invited to dinner by Colonel Seidlits, and was made welcome by his lady as often as ſhe ſaw company in the evening.

In return for thoſe civilities, he thought it incumbent on him to point out to her the abſurdities of the Popiſh religion, as preparatory to her converſion to Calviniſm. With this view he was apt to introduce queſtions of a controverſial nature, and at one time threw out a ſneer at the doctrine of

of tranſubſtantiation in the preſence of Madame de Seidlits.

This was repeated by one of the company to Colonel Seidlits, who, the next time he ſaw the clergyman alone, ſaid to him mildly, "I am not certain, my good Sir, whether I ever informed you that my wife is of the Roman Catholic church."

"You never informed me," replied the other; "but it is long ſince I knew that Madame de Seidlits had that misfortune."

"You may, if you pleaſe, leave her misfortunes to thoſe who are more naturally concerned in them," ſaid the Colonel; "but ſince you knew of what I was in hopes you had been ignorant, I own I am ſurpriſed that you could ſpeak of one of the articles of her faith in the manner you did, in her preſence."

"I recollect what you allude to," ſaid the clergyman; "but really the article in queſtion is ſo abſurd and incomprehenſible, that it is impoſſible to mention it otherwiſe than in terms of deriſion."

"Pray,"

"Pray," replied the Colonel, "do you believe in all the doctrines to be found in the public creeds and formularies of our own church?"

"That I do," replied the Divine; "and would die at the ſtake, were it neceſſary, avowing them."

"Then I hope you have a better reaſon for thinking tranſubſtantiation abſurd, than merely its being incomprehenſible?"

"There is no article in any of the Proteſtant creeds ſo incomprehenſible as that you mention," replied the Divine.

"I did not know there were degrees in incomprehenſibility," ſaid the Colonel; "if there is any propoſition which I am quite unable to comprehend, it will be difficult to ſtate another which I can comprehend leſs."

"I will undertake to make you comprehend diſtinctly every article of the creeds you allude to," ſaid the Divine, with an undaunted air.

"Rather

"Rather than impoſe ſuch a taſk upon you," ſaid the Colonel, "allow me to continue to believe them without fully comprehending them."

"Well, Colonel, you will do as you pleaſe; but ſurely it would afford you great ſatisfaction if your lady could be prevailed on to embrace the ſame religion that you profeſs."

"No; I cannot ſay it would," replied the Colonel, coldly.

"Good God! that ſeems very unaccountable; will you be ſo good as to tell me your reaſon?" ſaid the other.

"Becauſe the thing cannot happen, Sir, without either my changing my religion, and I intend no ſuch thing, or by my endeavouring to perſuade my wife to change her's, which I have ſolemnly promiſed never to do: beſides, I am certain that Madame de Seidlits is an amiable woman, and a moſt excellent wife, with the religion ſhe profeſſes; and there is no knowing what alteration a change of ſentiments might make."

"What

"What alteration, but a favourable one, can accrue from renouncing one of the worſt religions in the world for the beſt?"

"As to which is the worſt, and which the beſt," ſaid Seidlits, "the world is much divided."

"The Proteſtant religion is gaining ground every day," ſaid the Clergyman; "and there is reaſon to hope, that in a ſhort time there will be more Proteſtants in the world than Papiſts."

"That to be ſure is very comfortable news," ſaid the Colonel; "but it can have no great weight in the preſent argument; becauſe, ever ſince the beginning of the world, there have been greater numbers devoted to falſe religions than to the true; and even now, if the queſtion were to be decided by a plurality of voices, the religion of Mahomet might perhaps carry the palm both from the Proteſtant and Roman Catholic."

"But you yourſelf are a Proteſtant?—*you at leaſt* prefer the Proteſtant form of

worſhip to all others?" ſaid the Clergyman.

"I certainly prefer no other form of worſhip to the Proteſtant," replied the Colonel.

"Then I ſhould be glad to know," ſaid the Clergyman, with a triumphant air, "*wherefore* you prefer no other?—the ſame arguments which convinced you, might convince your lady."

"No," ſaid the Colonel; "that they could not."

"Why ſo?" ſaid the Clergyman. "By what powerful arguments were you perſuaded to adhere to the Proteſtant religion?"

"By this powerful argument," replied the Colonel, "that I was born in Berlin, and bred at Koningſberg."

"That anſwer ſmells of infidelity, Colonel, and implies that you conſider religion merely as an affair of geography, and of little or no importance in the world," ſaid the Clergyman.

"It

"It implies more than I intended then," replied Seidlits; "for although I do think that nine hundred and ninety-nine in a thouſand of mankind are determined in the religion they profeſs by the place of their birth and education; I do not infer from thence, that religion is of no importance: on the contrary, I am convinced, that thoſe who cheriſh religion, perform the relative duties of life in the moſt conſcientious manner."

"So you put all religions on the ſame footing?" ſaid the Clergyman.

"By no means," anſwered Seidlits; "I know indeed of no religion which does not inculcate morality; but as I have not had any opportunity of obſerving the influence of other religions on men's conduct, I ſpeak of the Chriſtian religion only;—which, if I am not miſtaken, contributes greatly to render mankind better and happier even in this life."

"You ſpeak of the reformed religion, I preſume," ſaid the Clergyman; "for as

to

to the abſurd tenets of the Roman Catholic creed, it is impoſſible for you, or any man of ſenſe, to reſpect them."

"I ſpeak not of the creeds which, ſince the Chriſtian æra, have been compoſed by the fathers of either church," replied the Colonel; "I have not leiſure, perhaps not underſtanding ſufficient to weigh or compare them with due preciſion. My obſervation regards only the precepts given, and the example ſet, by the Author of Chriſtianity himſelf, and in which both churches are agreed. The good effect which a due impreſſion of thoſe divine precepts has upon the mind ſeems, I confeſs, very evident to me, whether the individuals on which it operates are Roman Catholics or Proteſtants."

"That you, by accident, have met with Roman Catholics who were reckoned good moral men, I ſhall not diſpute," ſaid the Miniſter; "but that any part of their goodneſs proceeded from their religion, is what I can never admit."

"Why not?" ſaid the Colonel; "the moral precepts of both religions are the ſame."

"The ſpirit of thoſe who profeſs them are very different, however," reſumed the Miniſter. "When did the Proteſtants diſplay the ſame ſpirit of perſecution that the Papiſts have ſo often done?"

"Let us remember," replied Seidlits, "that the church of Rome was eſtabliſhed in power when the firſt reformers began to attack its doctrines; that an attack on its doctrines endangered the power and riches of its clergy: that it is natural for mankind, when they have long been in poſſeſſion of power and wealth, to be exceedingly unwilling to relinquiſh them; and the clergy do not form an exception to this general rule: they, as well as others, are apt to be extremely angry with thoſe who attempt to diſpoſſeſs them; beſides, let us recollect, that all eſtabliſhed governments think they have a right to uſe ſeverities againſt revolting ſubjects, whatever good

grounds thoſe ſubjects have had for revolting,—and——"

"But remember," interrupted the Clergyman, "the perfidy and cruelty diſplayed by the Roman Catholics in the maſſacre of St. Bartholomew—think of the ſhocking reign of the gloomy bigoted Philip, and the enormities of his unrelenting general the Duke of Alva."

"I do think of them with horror," ſaid the Colonel, "and I have no mind to palliate ſuch dreadful inſtances of human wickedneſs and deluſion. I only meant to hint, that thoſe ought not to have credit for not diſplaying the ſame ſpirit who were not in poſſeſſion of the ſame power. I am willing to believe, however, that with equal power they would not have committed equal exceſſes; though I am ſorry to ſay, that inſtances might be mentioned, which create a ſuſpicion that more power would have perverted the ſpirit of ſome of the moſt diſtinguiſhed reformers, and might poſſibly have the ſame effect on their ſuc-

ceſſors. It is therefore fortunate for the clergy of Holland, Switzerland, ſome parts of Germany, and other countries in Europe, that there is little danger of their degenerating from that cauſe."

"I doubt much, whether that is a fortunate circumſtance," replied the Clergyman; "for although riches, power, and pomp have a miſchievous effect when proſtituted to the unworthy, yet they are ſuitable to the character we bear of the ambaſſadors of Heaven, and might give more weight to our admonitions."

"Power and wealth are the great corrupters of the human heart," ſaid Seidlits, "and might ſpread their baneful influence even to the *ambaſſadors* themſelves; in which event, in lieu of that ſpirit of toleration, benevolence, and humanity, which diſtinguiſhes them at preſent; a great acceſſion of power and riches might gradually inſpire them with pride and ambition, and render them at laſt little better than ſo many cardinals and popes."

"Never,

"Never, never," cried the Clergyman; "the ſpirit of Proteſtantiſm is too averſe to any ſuch alteration."

"The ſpirit of human nature, however, has a mighty tendency that way," ſaid Seidlits.

"Learning and deep reflexion correct the depraved tendencies of our nature," reſumed the Eccleſiaſtic, "and leave the mind equally free from the degrading abſurdities of ſuperſtition, and the impious ſophiſtry of ſcepticiſm."

"That is a ſtate of mind devoutly to be wiſhed," ſaid Seidlits.

"Is it not?" cried the Parſon with exultation; "you yourſelf allow that ſuperſtition is degrading to the mind of man," continued he.

"I do," replied the Colonel; "and the more readily, as I never ſaid it was otherwiſe."

"Well, I will now prove to you, that ſcepticiſm is as uncomfortable as the other is degrading: I hope you have no preſſing buſineſs at preſent," continued the Parſon,

" becauſe, to put the ſubject in a clear light, it will be neceſſary to divide it into three heads, and then ſubdivide each of theſe into four principal branches.

" To begin then with the firſt and moſt important of thoſe three heads.

" Any degree of doubt or uncertainty, particularly on matters of high importance, has been conſidered in all ages as irkſome, and——"

" I aſk pardon for interrupting you," ſaid the Colonel; " it is only to know whether you mean to prove, that to a well-diſpoſed mind a ſtate of certainty is more agreeable than any degree of doubt on religious ſubjects?"

" That is preciſely what I am going to demonſtrate," reſumed the Parſon.

" I will ſave you the trouble," ſaid Seidlits, " for there is nothing of which I am more firmly convinced."

" Is it not aſtoniſhing then," ſaid the other, " that ſo many ſhould be ſo fooliſh as to perſevere in a ſtate of uncomfortable doubt?"

" Very

"Very aſtoniſhing indeed," ſaid the Colonel; "eſpecially as it is in every body's power to believe whatever will afford them moſt comfort."

"I perceive," ſaid the Parſon, "you have peruſed my treatiſe upon the faculty of believing."

The Colonel nodded.

"I there clearly prove, that the Roman Catholics have too much faith, and ſome ſects of the Proteſtants too little; and then carefully point out the golden medium which mankind ought to adhere to."

"It is very fortunate for mankind," ſaid the Colonel, "that *you* know it."

"It is ſo," reſumed the Parſon; "for of this happy medium it may be ſaid, more emphatically than of any thing elſe *neſcire malum eſt.*"

"If I am not miſtaken," ſaid Seidlits, "an anſwer to your work was publiſhed by a certain French Abbé, who, according to the cuſtom of his countrymen, ſeemed very fond of jeſting."

"That was a moſt abominable and a moſt provoking performance," cried the Parſon with great vehemence; "but jeſts are no arguments, Colonel."

"No; nor arguments are no jeſts," ſaid Seidlits; "yet this provoking Abbé endeavoured to make a jeſt of all your arguments."

"There will be no jeſting in Hell, however," ſaid the Parſon, with a vengeful aſpect.

"True," ſaid the Colonel; "when you have once got him there, the laugh will be on your ſide—"

"But pray, Colonel," reſumed the Miniſter, "do you imagine that your lady has ever read my book?"

"I ſhould rather think not," ſaid the Colonel.

"What a pity!" exclaimed the other; "it would go a great way to cure her of many prejudices."

"The remedy would be rather violent," ſaid the Colonel.

"Perhaps

"Perhaps it might ſeem a little ſo at firſt," rejoined the Clergyman; "but were I to converſe with her on thoſe ſubjects, I ſhould begin in gentle terms."

"That would be very proper," ſaid the Colonel.

"The ſooner I begin then the better," ſaid the Parſon; "after I have talked with her for a few hours, ſhe will be able to decide between the two religions on rational principles."

"I have already decided, on what I think rational principles," ſaid the Colonel, "not to diſturb her."

"You have decided very erroneouſly," reſumed this perſevering Eccleſiaſtic.

"Let me intreat you, my good Sir," interrupted the Colonel, "not to interfere in my domeſtic concerns, but to mind your own buſineſs."

"I beg leave to inform you, Colonel Seidlits," ſaid the Clergyman, with a dignified air, "that I conſider the propagation of goſpel truths, and the unmaſking of impoſture, particularly thoſe of the church

of

of Rome, as *my* buſineſs; and I will embrace every opportunity of doing both, in ſpite of the united oppoſition of men and devils."

The Colonel having looked very earneſtly for ſome time at this violent Reformer, at length ſaid, "I beg your excuſe, Sir, for having engroſſed ſo much of your valuable time; it is a miſtake I ſhall never again fall into." So ſaying, he pulled off his hat, made a low bow, and walked away. The moment he entered his own houſe, he gave orders that his relation ſhould be no more admitted.

CHAP. XXXIX.

Multa putans, ſortemque animo miſeratus iniquam.
VIRG. Æn. l. vi.

THE attention which Colonel Seidlits diſplayed in preventing his lady from being diſquieted in her religious opinions, and the delicacy of his behaviour on every occaſion, was felt by her with affectionate gratitude. She was, however, by no means ſo eaſy in the contemplation of her huſband's being a Proteſtant, as he was in that of her remaining a Roman Catholic; and although the arguments of Father Mulo did not prevail on her to attempt his converſion, yet few things could have afforded her greater ſatisfaction than to have ſeen her huſband adopt from conviction, what ſhe conſidered as the only true religion. But with what a face could ſhe ſpeak to him on a ſubject which he never mentioned

to

to her, and which he permitted no perſon whatever to diſturb her about? Any attempt on her part to alter his ſentiments, implied that ſhe conſidered herſelf as wiſer than he; whereas ſhe only conſidered herſelf as more fortunate, in having been educated in a better religion.

Theſe and ſimilar conſiderations, which occupied the mind of this worthy lady, were ſometimes on the point of being ſacrificed to the anguiſh ſhe felt as often as the idea of her huſband's continuing in hereſy, and all the dreadful conſequences, occurred to her terrified imagination; for the natural clearneſs of her underſtanding and the ſerenity of her diſpoſition, were clouded and diſturbed by the terrific aſpect and unrelenting ſeverity of ſome of the doctrines in which ſhe had been inſtructed.

This anxiety of mind on her huſband's account always increaſed in proportion to the hazards he was expoſed to in the exerciſe of his profeſſion, and became particularly ſevere in the courſe of a tedious illneſs, into which he fell in conſequence of a blow by

by the but-end of a muſket which he received on his breaſt at the battle of Hochkirchen. This contuſion produced a ſpitting of blood, and was ſuppoſed to lay the foundation of that illneſs of which he afterwards died.

Soon after the battle, the Colonel was carried to a place of ſafety. And Madame de Seidlits, having obtained a paſs from Marſhal Daun, haſtened to the village in which her huſband was; where ſhe attended him during his long illneſs with equal patience and tenderneſs. At one time he was, by the miſtake of the phyſician, thought in immediate danger. The anxiety which had ſo long lurked within the breaſt of Madame de Seidlits now became too violent for her to conceal; the very acute ſorrow which ſhe endured from the thought of loſing a huſband ſhe highly eſteemed and dearly loved, was abſorbed in the keener anguiſh ariſing from the awful idea of the danger which threatened his immortal ſoul; and this impreſſed her with the more dread that it ſeemed to give him none.

Her

Her terrors on this ſubject were augmented by a letter which ſhe received from her indefatigable relation Father Mulo; who, having heard of the Colonel's illneſs, moſt charitably entreated her to exert herſelf now or never; as there was no poſſibility of ſalvation for her huſband, unleſs he relinquiſhed hereſy, embraced the catholic faith, confeſſed his ſins, and obtained abſolution. One argument, he thought, proved the good policy of this meaſure beyond the power of reply; it was this:—"The proteſtants themſelves," ſaid this ingenious prieſt, "admit, that well-meaning and virtuous perſons may be ſaved, notwithſtanding their dying in the Roman catholic perſuaſion; whereas we aſſert, that no heretic, however virtuous in other reſpects he may be, can enter into the kingdom of heaven: it is apparent, therefore, that your huſband runs no riſk in following your advice, but the greateſt by neglecting it."

The agitation and confuſion of Madame de Seidlits's mind prevented her from ſeeing

ing this kind of reaſoning in the ſame light in which her good ſenſe would have preſented it in a calmer moment.

One day, therefore, when her apprehenſions on the Colonel's account were at the height, after much circumlocution, with infinite delicacy, but in the moſt pathetic terms, ſhe communicated her fears to him, and concluded by urging him to forſake his own religion, and embrace that of the church of Rome.

Having heard her with the utmoſt attention and ſome degree of ſurpriſe, the Colonel ſaid, "I fear, my dear, you are too much alarmed on my account; but I aſſure you I have paſſed an uncommonly good night, and I feel myſelf better than I was yeſterday."—"I am moſt exceedingly glad to hear it," ſaid Madame de Seidlits; "but let this be no reaſon for preventing a meaſure of infinite importance, which cannot be taken too ſoon, but may be delayed till it is too late."

"My deareſt Thereſa," ſaid the Colonel, taking hold of her hand, "I view your preſent

preſent ſolicitude and importunity in the true light; I conſider them as freſh proofs of that noble friendſhip and affection which has been the happineſs of my life, and of which I ever had a grateful conviction; but I muſt aſſure you, that although I have never urged you, nor permitted any other perſon to urge you, on the ſame ſubject on which you now preſs me, it is not becauſe I have leſs concern for your ſoul than you have for mine; nor is it from a want of partiality for the religion which I myſelf profeſs."—"From what motive then has your forbearance proceeded?" ſaid Madame de Seidlits. "From a conviction," replied he, "that you are as certain of ſalvation in your religion as I can be in mine." "You muſt believe then," ſaid Madame de Seidlits with quickneſs, "that both religions are equally good."—"No, my love, that does not follow; for although I think there is much good in both, ſtill I think my own is the preferable; yet," continued he gaily, "as you poſſeſs ſo much more of yours than I do of mine, I imagine the ſuperiority.

periority in quantity will make up for the deficiency in quality, and render you as ſecure as you can wiſh."

"My dear Colonel," replied Madame de Seidlits, "is this a ſubject, or is this a proper occaſion for jeſting?"

"I beg pardon, my dear," ſaid the Colonel, "I will be very ſerious: in one great and eſſential point we have the happineſs to be of one opinion; both religions agree, that it is our duty to live a life of integrity, and do all the good we can to our fellow-creatures."

"For which reaſon," interrupted Madame de Seidlits, "I am ſo anxious to do the greateſt good poſſible to him who is infinitely the deareſt to me of all my fellow-creatures."

"None of them can be more grateful," replied the Colonel, "than I am for thoſe good intentions; and you cannot doubt of my being willing to render you the ſame ſervice; yet if you were to continue to preſs this upon me, and I the ſame upon you, the unavoidable effect of our eagerneſs to

make each other eternally happy, would be the making each other eternally miſerable; for what can be worſe in this world or the next, than everlaſting diſputes between man and wife? Let us therefore avoid all diſputable points," continued he, "and endeavour to promote our own happineſs, and that of our neighbours, by every means in our power. The moſt probable reaſon I can conceive for the unequal diſtribution of the comforts of life, is to afford mankind opportunities for the exerciſes of benevolence, gratitude, and other virtues, which I am inclined to believe is the moſt likely way of acquiring the favour of the Deity. We certainly have it frequently in our power to add to the happineſs or miſery of our fellow-creatures; to God Almighty we can neither do good nor harm; and therefore I cannot help thinking, that the conduct of our lives is of infinitely more importance, than our religious opinions, or the forms of our worſhip.—It has been already ſettled between us," continued he, "that you ſhall educate our daughters in

your

your way of thinking, as our ſons ſhall be educated in mine; our mutual endeavour will be, to render them virtuous women and honeſt men, which implies benevolence and liberality of ſentiment; if we ſucceed, I have no doubt, notwithſtanding our having taken different roads, but we ſhall all meet in heaven."

"God Almighty, in his infinite mercy, grant it may be ſo," cried Madame de Seidlits, in a tranſport of affection; "for I am certain heaven will be no heaven to me without thoſe I ſo dearly love." Then recollecting herſelf a little, ſhe took occaſion, from what her huſband had juſt ſaid, to urge the laſt argument of her confeſſor:—"Since you have no doubt," ſaid ſhe, "of our meeting in heaven, although I retain my religion, and ſince thoſe of our church declare there is no admiſſion for thoſe who perſiſt in hereſy, why will you not, my deareſt huſband, take the ſafer courſe, and embrace the catholic faith?"

Here the Colonel, ſmiling through the tears which his lady's endearments had

previouſly forced into his eyes, replied, "I confeſs, my beloved Thereſa, that this laſt argument is ſo unworthy of your excellent underſtanding, that I am convinced you have had it ſuggeſted by ſome one of far inferior ſenſe and candour to yourſelf. Conſider that, in my conſcience,—for whether I am right or wrong is out of the queſtion;—but in my conſcience I think the proteſtant religion preferable to that which you profeſs; yet you adviſe me, as the ſafeſt courſe I can take, to embrace yours; that is to ſay, to commit a piece of groſs hypocriſy, and with a view to what? to impoſe on men? No; there might be ſenſe in that; for men are impoſed upon daily by hypocrites: but this piece of hypocriſy to which you adviſe me, is with a view to impoſe upon God, and to get ſmuggled into heaven as a Roman catholic, while in my heart and conſcience I remain a Proteſtant."

Madame de Seidlits ſeemed embarraſſed; after a ſhort ſilence ſhe ſaid, "I fear my anxiety makes me abſurd; forgive me, my dear,"

dear," continued ſhe, "for teaſing you in this fooliſh manner."

"I ſhall think myſelf for ever obliged by the affectionate and generous anxiety of my Thereſa," ſaid Seidlits.

"How could I allow myſelf to think for a moment that ſuch integrity, ſuch manly generoſity of mind, as you have always diſplayed," ſaid ſhe, taking her huſband by the hand, "and ſuch ſtrict adherence to the dictates of conſcience, can be rejected? Theſe alſo were the virtues of the man whoſe memory you ſo much revere, your noble friend and patron the Marſhal."

"Ah! my Thereſa," cried Seidlits, "can the long courſe of honour and integrity purſued by the gallant Keith be forgotten and rejected of Heaven, becauſe he was born in a proteſtant country, or perhaps entertained erroneous ſpeculative opinions? I well knew the uprightneſs of his mind; have ſeen many inſtances of his humanity and benevolence even to his enemies, and have myſelf received proofs of his gene-

rous friendſhip; it will be my lateſt boaſt to have been a witneſs to thoſe noble exertions in which he finiſhed a life of honour in the field of Hochkirchen, where the gallant Prince Francis of Brunſwic, a family ſo fertile in heroes, alſo fell. I thank Heaven I had the honour of aſſiſting the Marſhal's intrepid endeavours in rallying and inſpiriting our diſordered troops, in following him again and again to the charge; by which means the elated enemy was checked, our troops protected, the great monarch he ſerved, and who honoured him with his friendſhip, enabled to retreat in ſuch order as to pitch his camp within a few miles of the field from which he retired. This great officer himſelf refuſing, although dangerouſly wounded, to quit the field, continued his exertions, till he received a ſecond wound, which proved inſtantly mortal. And ſhall a parcel of ignorant monks, a gang of uſeleſs drones, deal damnation around on all who have not a ready faith in their legends and their—? But I aſk your pardon, my dear," ſaid

ſaid Seidlits, checking himſelf; "I did not mean to ſay any thing diſobliging; but I heartily wiſh you would obſerve the dictates of your own underſtanding more, and liſten to the ſuggeſtions of others leſs; the virtuous conduct which you have hitherto purſued is your beſt ſecurity for happineſs here and hereafter; permit me to endeavour to ſecure mine in the manner moſt agreeable to my conſcience, and of courſe the moſt likely to be ſucceſsful."

"Forgive me, my deareſt friend," ſaid Madame de Seidlits, "for this once, and I ſhall aſſure you, all the monks on earth ſhall never prevail on me to give you a ſingle hint of this nature again. I am not a little aſhamed of what I was fooliſhly induced to ſay;—Heaven be praiſed that you ſeem ſo much better than you were laſt night."

CHAP. XL.

Shall man be left abandon'd in the duſt,
When Fate relenting, let's the flow'r revive?
Shall Nature's voice, to man alone unjuſt,
Bid him, tho' doom'd to periſh, hope to live?
Is it for this fair Virtue oft muſt ſtrive
With diſappointment, penury, and pain?
No; Heav'n's immortal ſpring ſhall yet revive;
And man's majeſtic beauty bloom again.

BEATTIE.

THIS was the firſt and laſt diſpute on religion that ever paſſed between Colonel Seidlits and his lady, although both continued attached to *that* in which they had been bred; yet, from this time, Madame de Seidlits ſeemed to adopt, in many particulars, the liberal ſentiments of her huſband. They lived together in the happieſt union for ſeveral years after the general peace.

Laura,

Laura, their only child, was educated according to the agreement between them, in her mother's religion.

It was already remarked, that the Colonel never fully recovered his health after the contuſion in his breaſt; on the ſlighteſt cold, and ſometimes without any known cauſe, he was liable to be ſeized with fits of oppreſſive and difficult breathing; a ſevere attack of this nature obliged him, by the king's expreſs order, to quit the field in the middle of that ſhort war between Pruſſia and the emperor reſpecting the ſucceſſion of Bavaria. Having returned by ſlow journies to Berlin, he ſoon after had the happineſs to hear of his ſon's diſtinguiſhing himſelf by relieving the Baron Carloſtein from the Auſtrian Huſſars. And at the concluſion of the peace he retired to his ſmall villa, with his wife and daughter, where he had the pleaſure of entertaining the two friends, as has been mentioned. Carloſtein he never ſaw more; but Captain Seidlits ſpent all the time he could be ſpared from his regiment in his father's

father's family, with whom he lived in the greateſt harmony.

But Colonel Seidlits's health gradually declined; this however was more apparent to others, than to thoſe conſtantly with him; and Madame de Seidlits was for a long time deceived by the cheerful air her huſband always aſſumed in her preſence; for his mind remained in full vigour notwithſtanding his bodily weakneſs. Having perceived, however, for ſome days, that he ſhewed uncommon ſolicitude in arranging and ſettling his affairs, ſhe took notice of that circumſtance to him with an air of apprehenſion.

"Is it not a ſufficient reaſon," ſaid he, my dear friend, "that I know I muſt die ſome time or other, and that I do not know how ſoon?"

"But why diſturb your mind with buſineſs at preſent?" ſaid ſhe; "you are certainly in no immediate danger."

"You are not then of the opinion of the Duc de la Rochefoucault," replied the Colonel, "who ſays, *Il n'y a que la mort qui*

qui ſoit certaine, et cependant nous agiſſons comme ſi c'etoit la ſeule choſe incertaine."

"That is applicable to me as well as to you, my dear," ſaid Madame de Seidlits.

"It is ſo," replied the Colonel; "and if I had become apprehenſive of your dying as often as you prepared yourſelf for death, I ſhould have been in continual apprehenſion ever ſince I knew you." The Colonel ſaid this with ſuch an eaſy air, that Madame de Seidlits became leſs alarmed.

But although the Colonel had none of the oppreſſive aſthmatic attacks as formerly, he felt his ſtrength melting faſt away; he permitted none of his family, however, to attend him through the night; an old ſoldier alone, who had been long in his ſervice, lay in his bed-chamber.

A few days after this converſation with his lady, having had a very diſturbed night, he perceived the near approach of death. He cauſed himſelf to be raiſed in his bed in the morning, a little before the hour at which his family uſually entered the room; they were unconſcious of his illneſs through the night;

night; his lady, with Laura and Captain Seidlits, ſat around his bed;—when the Colonel, ſmiling, ſaid in a faint voice to his ſon, "It is a long while, Seidlits, ſince I aſſured my wife, that notwithſtanding the difference of our ſentiments on certain ſubjects, this company ſhould all meet in heaven."

"I hope your propheſy will be accompliſhed, Sir," ſaid the young man; "but not for a long time."

"It is my hope," replied the Colonel, "that it will be long before the reſt of the company follow; but I feel that I muſt ſet out ſoon."

"Ah, father!" cried Laura, with a voice of ſorrow. Captain Seidlits looked with anguiſh at his mother-in-law.

"Why do you talk ſo, my dear?" ſaid Madame de Seidlits; "you ſeem a little faint this morning; but you have often recovered from more oppreſſive ſymptoms."

"Never, never! my beloved friend," ſaid he; "but you would not wiſh me to ſtruggle any longer; the hope of perfect recovery

covery has been long over, and the ſtruggle is ending."

"Alas!" cried ſhe, ſtarting from her ſeat, greatly alarmed, "ſend for a phyſician."

"If you love me," ſaid he, "let there be no intruſion."

She ſunk on the bed, graſping his hand; "Let my lateſt breath," continued he, "declare my unaltered affection. I regret that I have been able to make ſo ſmall a proviſion; but what can a ſoldier provide? I have ſerved an heroic monarch with fidelity; he knows it. Your conduct, my Seidlits," looking at his ſon, "has thrown comfort and gladneſs on the heart of your father, and made my declining years the happieſt of my life. I know you will behave with duty to your mother and affection to your ſiſter. Farewel, my beloved Thereſa;—farewel, my ſweet Laura;—farewel, my Seidlits:—I reſign you to *his* protection, into whoſe merciful hands I reſign my own ſoul.—God Almighty bleſs you;—once more, farewel;

wel;—but I hope—I truſt not for ever.—My eyes grow dim!—a dark miſt overhangs them!—I ſee you not, my Thereſa!—My children!—my organs fail!—yet my ſoul departs entire——Father of mercy, receive my ſoul!"—His voice failed, and after a few ſobs this gallant ſoldier expired.

Madame de Seidlits remained in ſpeechleſs affliction, holding the cold hand of her huſband for a conſiderable time after he had breathed his laſt. Laura, kneeling by her mother, wept without uttering a ſyllable, and Captain Seidlits, unable to comfort either, ſtood motionleſs with grief, till a ſervant entering the chamber, Seidlits ſupported Laura and her mother to their apartment, and then retired to his own.

CHAP. XLI.

La gravité eſt un myſtere du corps, inventé pour cacher les défauts de l'eſprit. ROCHEFOUCAULT.

COLONEL SEIDLITS left his family in very moderate circumſtances. The king appointed a penſion to his widow, and ſoon after promoted his ſon, who had only the rank of Lieutenant, to the command of a troop of dragoons. This young man behaved with great generoſity to his mother-in-law; and continued for ſome time after his father's death to live with her and his ſiſter; but, on his being obliged to attend his regiment, Madame de Seidlits took the reſolution of returning to her native country, which ſhe put in execution notwithſtanding the ſtrongeſt ſolicitations on the part of Captain Seidlits, whoſe friendſhip and affection for them both

made him exceedingly deſirous of their remaining in Germany.

When we were led into this long digreſſion, we left Madame de Seidlits in converſation with Father Pedro, which was interrupted by the coming of Laura and Father Mulo. The latter always harboured fears that Madame Seidlits's long reſidence in a country of heretics had diminiſhed in her mind that ſalutary horror in which he thought they ſhould be held by every ſincere catholic. To counteract this, and to revive her faith in thoſe points which he conſidered as moſt eſſential, he ſent her, ſince her arrival at Naples, a large folio of divinity, earneſtly intreating her to peruſe it attentively along with her daughter, telling her at the ſame time that ſhe might rely on having the ſecond volume as ſoon as they had read the firſt.

"Have you peruſed that admirable work, my dear daughter?" ſaid Father Mulo, ſeeing the book lie on the table.

"I have begun it," replied Madame de Seidlits; "it is a book of too ſerious a nature to be read over ſuperficially."

"It

"It is indeed a work of great weight, and requires the utmoſt attention," ſaid Father Mulo.

"It were fortunate," ſaid Laura, "if the authors of books which require ſo much attention could write them ſo as to command it."

"The buſineſs of an author is to write books," ſaid Father Mulo, with becoming gravity; "it is the duty of the reader to command his attention when he peruſes them."

"You are indeed too hard upon authors, my good young lady," ſaid Father Pedro, "to expect that they ſhould not only write their books, but alſo be obliged to command the attention of their readers. My learned brother has, with more regard to diſtributive juſtice, divided the toil between the author and the reader."

"In my humble opinion," replied Laura, ſmiling, "he allots too large a proportion of the taſk to the courteous reader. It is not ſo eaſy a matter to command one's at-

tention on peruſing certain books, as you ſeem to think. I own I never found mine more diſobedient than in the peruſal of that very admirable work which the reverend Father recommends."

"Your taſte, I am afraid," ſaid Father Mulo, addreſſing himſelf to Laura with much ſolemnity, "is in ſome meaſure corrupted by books of prophane hiſtory, or of amuſement, whoſe merit conſiſts in their eloquence, or perhaps in their wit."

"And you may judge, my dear daughter," added Father Pedro, "how little value ought to be put on that kind of merit, by its being often to be met with in the writings of infidels and heretics."

"I ſhould be better pleaſed," reſumed Laura, "to meet it elſewhere; but I hope, Father, you do not think that where there is wit there muſt alſo be infidelity."

"Why really, daughter," ſaid Father Mulo, anſwering with more gravity of manner than depth of reflection, "where there is much of the firſt, there is often reaſon to ſuſpect ſome of the laſt."

"I cannot

"I cannot be of that opinion," ſaid Madame de Seidlits; "for I have generally found true wit in better company; and although we ſometimes find infidelity accompanied by wit, how much oftener are we ſhocked with pert oſtentatious infidelity without any wit at all?"

"I am convinced my mother is in the right," cried Laura; "and I hope you will allow, Father, that there is not a neceſſary connexion between them."

Father Mulo perceiving at length that he had ſpoken a little inconſiderately, was obliged to own, though with evident reluctance, that he hoped there was not.

"I am *certain* there is not," added Laura; "and I am obliged to my mother for having made me remark inſtances, both in converſation and in reading, where not only the ſtrength of the arguments, but alſo the pureſt wit, was on the ſide of virtue and piety."

"I can aſſure you, young lady, from my own experience," ſaid Father Mulo, with an air of great ſagacity, and wiſhing to re-

tract his firſt aſſertion, " that it is almoſt always the caſe;—true wit and eloquence are generally on the ſide of orthodoxy."

" How comes it then that this author," ſaid Laura, pointing to the large volume, " has not ſeaſoned his work with a little wit or eloquence, ſince there is nothing ſinful in them; and they would have made it more univerſally read, and of courſe more uſeful?"

" How comes it?" repeated Father Mulo, who was not famous for quick replies on emergencies of this kind,—" how comes it did you ſay?"

" Why it comes by the diabolical malice of Satan," cried Father Pedro, ſtepping in to the relief of his brother; " it is all owing to the ſpite of our great ſpiritual enemy, who is ever ready to enliven the works of the wicked; and has, it would ſeem, perplexed the ſenſe and darkened the reaſoning of this excellent author, ſo as to render it a little laborious for the young lady

lady to read his work with the attention it requires."

"The greater the effort the more meritorious will it be in the young lady to perform that duty as ſhe ought," reſumed Father Mulo.

"True, brother," ſaid Pedro; "and thus the malice of Satan is defeated, and like the words of Balaam the ſon of Beor, what was intended as a curſe is converted into a bleſſing."

Father Pedro had a ſovereign contempt for his venerable brother; and as he wiſhed to retain his influence with Madame de Seidlits without participation, he was too ready to diſplay him in a ridiculous light before her, as in the preſent inſtance.

But perceiving that he ſhould have no farther opportunity that day of proſecuting the object of his viſit, he withdrew, leaving Father Mulo to dine with his two relations, which he did accordingly, and in ſuch a manner as gave them no ſuſpicion of his having already made a very ample repaſt at the houſe of a pious old lady, whoſe time

of dining was two hours earlier than that of Madame de Seidlits: for it muſt be allowed in juſtice to Father Mulo, that although he reaſoned but feebly, and thought with difficulty, he digeſted with uncommon force and freedom.

CHAP. XLII.

——— With tract oblique
At firſt, as one who ſought acceſs, but fear'd
To interrupt, ſide-long he works his way.
As when a ſhip by ſkilful ſteerſman wrought
Nigh rivers mouth or foreland, where the wind
Veers oft, as oft ſo ſteers, and ſhifts her ſails;
So varied he.——
MILTON.

FATHER Pedro having found Madame de Seidlits leſs tractable than he expected, reſolved, on the next occaſion, to ſound Laura herſelf, and try to diſpoſe her to the purpoſe he had in view. Accordingly, a few days after, on being left alone with her, he turned the converſation on the ſubject of charity; mentioned ſome individuals who diſtinguiſhed themſelves by the exerciſe of this virtue, and dwelt particularly on Zeluco, whom he repreſented as one of the moſt charitable perſons he had ever known; adding, That thoſe were happy who were bleſſed with benevolent

and charitable inclinations, but much more were they to be envied, who were alſo bleſſed with the means of putting ſuch inclinations into action.

Laura agreeing with him in this ſentiment, he ſaid, "Would not you be happy, my daughter, to be in this enviable ſituation?"

"I flatter myſelf," replied ſhe, "that if I ever had a great deſire to be rich, it proceeded from a diſpoſition to relieve the diſtreſſed. But it has been remarked, Father," added ſhe, "that thoſe who have nothing to give are wonderfully generous; and I myſelf have known ſome who, when they had not the power, expreſſed the ſtrongeſt inclination of being liberal; yet when they afterwards came to have the power, ſeemed entirely to loſe the inclination. Thoſe obſervations give me diffidence in myſelf; I am not certain what alteration riches might make in my own diſpoſition."

"I have no diffidence of you," ſaid the Father.

"Of

"Of this, at leaſt, I am certain," ſaid Laura, "that if I could know before-hand, that wealth would have the ſame effect on me that it ſeems to have had on ſome of my acquaintance, I ſhould refuſe it were it offered to me."

"Depend upon it, my dear daughter," ſaid Father Pedro, "thoſe you allude to, never had charitable and benevolent diſpoſitions; they have only affected to have them, when they well knew that nothing was expected, nor would be received from them. Their real diſpoſitions appeared afterwards when they became rich. But in you, my dear child, exiſts the reality, not the ſemblance, of benevolence; and riches could only enable you to extend your generoſity, not render it more ſincere."

Laura thanked him for his good opinion.

"I ſhould have ſtill a better opinion of you," ſaid Father Pedro, "if I had not been informed that you refuſed this very enviable power."

"I have no idea of what you mean," ſaid Laura.

"Tell

"Tell me, in the firſt place, my dear daughter, whether you really refuſed your hand to Signor Zeluco?"

"I did," ſaid ſhe, without heſitation.

"And what good reaſon could you have, my dear child, for rejecting ſo generous a man?"

"You will allow, Father, that a woman may have good reaſons for refuſing a man for her huſband, although ſhe does not think proper to reveal them to her Father Confeſſor."

"You ought to have very good reaſons indeed, daughter, for declining ſuch a fortunate and happy match."

"But my particular ſentiments and feelings might render it a very unhappy match."

"How could it be unhappy for you," ſaid the Father, "who would reap every advantage by the alliance?"

"If my huſband could reap none," ſaid ſhe, "that circumſtance alone would make it an uncomfortable alliance to me."

"Do

"Do not miſtake me, my dear child; your huſband would certainly acquire a beautiful, accompliſhed, and I hope a pious wife; but the gifts of fortune are all on his ſide. There are many beautiful and accompliſhed young ladies in Italy who would be happy to be united to Signor Zeluco: but what probability is there of your having the offer of a huſband of ſuperior fortune to his?"

"Not the leaſt," ſaid Laura; "but, my good Father, I thought the queſtion between us related to happineſs, not merely to fortune."

"It does ſo," anſwered Father Pedro; "and what do you think of the happineſs of having it in your power, as well as in your inclination, to do good to others; to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, protect the orphan, and make the widow's heart ſing for joy?"

"According to your own account, Father," ſaid Laura, "all this is done by Signor Zeluco's fortune already; to em-

barraſs ſuch a generous and charitable man with the additional expences which a wife occaſions," ſhe added with a ſmile, "would be diverting into different channels that bounty which, at preſent, flows entirely upon the naked, the orphan, and widow."

"There is no occaſion for turning it into another channel," ſaid the Father, a little peeviſhly; "but I perceive you are in a jeſting mood."

"You ſhall not be angry, Father," ſaid Laura; "if you are offended, I muſt be to blame."

"Nay," replied he, "I am not offended, child; your vivacity cannot offend me; I wiſh, however, it may not lead you into error."

"If it ever ſhould, Father," ſaid Laura, "I beg you will not, by way of expiation, enjoin me to give my hand to Zeluco; for that is a penance I ſhall never ſubmit to."

Laura

Laura pronounced theſe laſt words with ſuch ſtrength of emphaſis, as, joined to what her mother had ſaid, greatly damped the ſanguine hopes of Pedro with regard to the ſucceſs of his miſſion.

CHAP. XLIII.

S'il y a un amour pur et exempt du mêlange de nos autres paſſions, c'eſt celui qui eſt caché au fond du cœur et que nous ignorons nous-mêmes.

ROCHEFOUCAULT.

IN the mean time, Signora Sporza became ſo very fond of her two relations, that ſhe preferred their company to thoſe numerous aſſemblies in which ſhe had been accuſtomed to paſs her evenings. Having perceived that Laura had no great reliſh for them, ſhe formed a ſmall ſelect party at her own houſe, which met two or three times a week, and to which the Honourable Mr. N—, and a few others, were conſtantly invited.

This gentleman had long been on a footing of friendly intimacy with Signora Sporza, and now found an additional power of attraction to her parties in the lively and judicious converſation of Laura. Few men's company was more univerſally acceptable than

than Mr. N—'s; but what rendered him peculiarly agreeable to Madame de Seidlits and her daughter, was his acquaintance with the Baron Carloſtein and Captain Seidlits. He became known to the firſt during his reſidence at Potſdam; and the Baron, on his expreſſing an inclination to ſee the camp at Magdeburg, gave him a letter of introduction to his friend Captain Seidlits, who was there with his regiment; and Mr. N— always ſpoke of thoſe two gentlemen in high terms of commendation.

Laura was ſeldom or never in company with Mr. N—, without making freſh inquiry concerning her brother. It was not in Mr. N—'s power to talk much of him without his friend Carloſtein's being included in the circumſtances of the narrative; and every anecdote relating to thoſe gentlemen ſeemed highly intereſting to Madame de Seidlits, and ſtill more ſo to Laura.

"Pray, Sir," ſaid ſhe to Mr. N—, one evening when the reſt of the company were engaged at cards, "is my brother as fond of horſes as ever?"

"He

"He is remarkably fond of his horſes," replied Mr. N—; "and no officer in the army is eſteemed a better rider."

"He is very graceful on horſeback," ſaid Laura.

"He is very much ſo," replied Mr. N—.

"I do not think the ſcar on his face at all disfigures him," ſaid Laura.

"He had no ſcar on his face, madam, when I ſaw him," replied Mr. N—.

"No ſcar?" ſaid Laura, with ſurpriſe.

"No, madam;—not Captain Seidlits: his friend the Baron, indeed, has a very honourable ſcar covered with a piece of black plaſter, which does not disfigure him in the leaſt."

"I thought you had mentioned him," ſaid Laura, bluſhing very deeply.

A conſiderable degree of intimacy was gradually formed between Mr. N— and this young lady. It was hardly poſſible for them not to have a mutual eſteem for each other. Laura had received the moſt favourable impreſſion of Mr. N— from

Signora Sporza, who had ſpoke of him as a man of ſenſe, integrity, and benevolence; and her own obſervation of his converſation and behaviour, confirmed her in the juſtice of her friend's repreſentation. He, on the other hand, while he agreed with the general opinion of the graces of Laura's face and perſon, was ſtill more ſtruck with her other accompliſhments, with the genuine modeſty and unaffected dignity of manner which accompanied her beauty: ſhe was equally free from coquetry and diſguiſe; her ſentiments of thoſe around her might be eaſily gueſſed by her behaviour.

To thoſe of whom ſhe had but an indifferent opinion, ſhe obſerved ſuch a degree of cautious and polite reſerve as rendered it very difficult for them to be on a footing of any degree of freedom or eaſe with her, however ſtrongly they were deſirous of being ſo. But to thoſe of whom ſhe thought well, and particularly to Mr. N—, ſhe behaved with a natural frankneſs, expreſſive of confidence and good-will.

Yet although this engaging frankneſs of manner was extended to her male friends as well as her female, it was always attended with ſuch expreſſive purity and dignity as precluded licentious hopes or wiſhes; for innate modeſty pervaded the eaſy openneſs of her manners, appeared in all her words, actions, and geſtures, and preſided even in her dreſs. As often as the mode ſeemed to lean to the oppoſite ſide, Laura had the art of making her's retain the faſhionable air, while ſhe corrected the circumſtance which ſhe diſapproved.

Mr. N— had the ſame degree of eſteem and approbation of Laura, which ſhe made no difficulty of declaring for him; and there was no engagement which he would have preferred to paſſing an evening at Signora Sporza's, when he knew that Laura was to be of the party.

CHAP. XLIV.

Characteriſtic Sketches.

MR. N— had for his ſervant out of livery, one Buchanan, a Scotchman, to whom his maſter's growing attachment to Laura gave the greateſt concern; and his concern augmented in proportion to the beauties and accompliſhments which he himſelf could not help obſerving in that young lady, and the good qualities he heard aſcribed to her; for he had too good an opinion of his maſter's taſte and penetration to think him capable of a laſting attachment to one who was not remarkably accompliſhed. But Laura had one failing which, in this man's opinion, neither beauty, nor fortune, nor underſtanding, nor an aſſemblage of every good quality of mind or perſon could compenſate—ſhe was a Roman Catholic.

That his maſter ſhould be captivated, and poſſibly drawn into a marriage with a woman of that religion, Buchanan conſidered as one of the greateſt misfortunes that could happen to him, and he knew it would be viewed in the ſame light by Lady Elizabeth, Mr. N—'s aunt, by whom he had been placed with her nephew. The ſtrong attachment this man had for his maſter, and his extraordinary zeal for his welfare, prompted him to intermeddle in matters which did not properly belong to him, and to offer his advice much oftener than it was wiſhed or expected.

One day when Mr. N— dined at home, and expected nobody but Mr. Steele, who lived with him, the latter invited Mr. Squander, and he brought along with him a certain Mr. Bronze, one of thoſe goſſiping companions, who know every body, are of every body's opinion, and are always ready to laugh at every body's joke; who neſtle themſelves into the intimacy of men of fortune and rank, allow themſelves to be laughed at, are invited on that account, or

to

to fill a vacant chair at the table; and ſometimes merely to afford the landlord the comfort of having at leaſt one perſon in the company of inferior underſtanding to himſelf, whoſe chief employment is to fetch and carry tittle-tattle; become, at length as it were one of the family, and are alternately careſſed and abuſed like any other ſpaniel in it. This perſon had, many years ago, come to Italy with a party of young Engliſh, who, as they poſted through the country, dropped him ſick at Ferrara; and having reſided ever ſince in Italy, he was thought to have ſome taſte in pictures, antique intaglios, cameos, ſtatues, &c. and had picked up a conſiderable fortune by ſelling them to his countrymen who came to Rome or Naples.

Mr. Squander would not, for his own private ſatisfaction, have given a horſe-ſhoe for all the antiquities in Rome, and had no more taſte in painting than his pointer; yet, thinking that he muſt carry home a ſmall aſſortment of each, were it only to prove that he had been in Italy, Mr. Bronze

had been recommended to him as a great connoiſſeur, who would either furniſh him with what he wanted, or aſſiſt him in purchaſing it.

Buchanan waited at the ſide-board.—They talked of an aſſembly, at which Meſſrs. N—, Squander, and Steele, had been the preceding evening. The firſt ſpoke with warmth of the beauty of Laura. The antiquarian, who had alſo ſeen her, ſaid, Her face had a great reſemblance to a certain admired Madona of Guido's.—Mr. Squander obſerved, That he thought ſhe was very like a picture which he had ſeen at Bologna, but whether it was painted by Guido or by Rheni he could not recollect. —Mr. N— ſaid, ſmiling, That it was probably done by both, as they often painted conjunctly;—"but, however that may be," continued he, "the young lady I mentioned has one of the fineſt countenances that I ever ſaw either in nature or on canvaſs." Buchanan, who was ſorry to hear his maſter praiſe her with ſuch warmth, ſhook his head.

"You

"You have ſeen many handſomer in Scotland," ſaid Squander, addreſſing himſelf to Buchanan.

"I will not preſume to make any compariſons, Mr. Squander," replied Buchanan; "for, on the preſent occaſion, I doubt they would be thought odious."

Mr. N— had often deſired Squander to leave off the indecent cuſtom which he had, of addreſſing the ſervants, but without effect. So taking no notice of what paſſed between him and Buchanan, he proceeded to praiſe Laura's accompliſhments, particularly her voice, and her execution on the piano forte.

"*Your* countrywomen," ſaid Squander, renewing his attack on Buchanan, "prefer the Scotch fiddle."—The antiquarian laughed very heartily, and all the footmen tittered at this jeſt, which Squander himſelf called a bon mot.—"A bon mot!" repeated Steele.—"Yes, by G—d," ſaid Squander, "and as good a one as ever George Bon Mot uttered in his life. What think you, Buchanan?"

"It certainly bears this mark of a good joke, Mr. Squander," ſaid Buchanan, "that it has been often repeated; yet there are people who would rather be the object than the rehearſer of it."

"You are a wit, Mr. Buchanan," ſaid Bronze, tipping the wink to Squander, "and you will certainly make your fortune by it."

"If I ſhould fail that way, Mr. Bronze, I may try what is to be done by the haberdaſhing of intaglios and cameos, and other hardware," ſaid Buchanan.

"A great many more of *your* countrymen, indeed, have made their fortune as pedlars than as wits," reſumed Squander.

The Antiquarian burſt into a loud fit of laughter at this ſally, clapping his hands, and crying, "Excellent, bravo!"

Buchanan, obſerving that Mr. N— was diſpleaſed at what was going on, made no reply, till Squander puſhed him, by ſaying, "What have you to ſay to that, Buchanan?"

"All I have to ſay, Mr. Squander, is, that I have known ſome of my countrymen,

as

as well as yours, who were beholden to their fortune for all the applauſe their wit received."

Although Mr. N— could with difficulty refrain from ſmiling at this remark, aſſuming a ſerious air, he told Buchanan, There was no need of his farther attendance; and when he withdrew, Mr. N— ſtarted another ſubject, which prevented the Antiquarian and Mr. Squander from abuſing Buchanan, for which he ſaw them prepared.

Mr. N—, however, ſpoke not in his uſual affable manner to Buchanan the whole evening, and when he went out, addreſſing one of the footmen inſtead of Buchanan, as was his cuſtom, he ſaid, he was going to Madame de Seidlits.

Buchanan, imagining that his maſter was highly diſpleaſed with him, imputed it to his having ſhaven his head at the praiſes of Laura; and was now more convinced than ever, that Mr. N— was deſperately in love with her, and in immediate danger of propoſing marriage to her.

Under

Under this apprehenſion he reſolved to uſe every means, even at the riſk of greatly offending his maſter, to prevent a meaſure which he thought diametrically oppoſite to his intereſt and happineſs. Knowing that a certain Baronet, who was uncle to Mr. N— by the mother, and whoſe preſumptive heir Mr. N— was, had lately arrived at Rome, and was ſoon expected at Naples; Buchanan imagined the moſt likely means he could uſe to accompliſh his purpoſe, was to inform the Baronet; he therefore determined to write to him all his fears relative to his maſter. Buchanan had been educated at an univerſity, and had learning ſufficient to render him a pedant; to have an opportunity of diſplaying his learning therefore, in all probability, was an additional motive for his writing the following letter to the Baronet:

"Honoured Sir,

"Hearing of your arrival at Rome, I think it my indiſpenſable duty to inform you, that my maſter, and your nephew, the Ho-

Honourable Mr. N—, has been ſeized with a violent paſſion for a young lady denominated Laura Seidlits, who lately arrived at this city from Germany. The young woman is of a comely countenance—*Vultus nimium lubricus aſpici*, and, as far as I have hitherto been able to learn, of a very tolerable reputation. Yet, notwithſtanding the fairneſs of her character and countenance, ſhe is at bottom a black Papiſt.—*Hinc illæ lachrymæ!*—This is the cauſe of my affliction; for were ſhe as beautiful as Helen of Greece, Cleopatra of Egypt, or even as Mary Queen of Scots, ſhe being, like the foreſaid Mary, of the Popiſh perſuaſion, would be a moſt unſuitable ſpouſe for my maſter. Yet there is hardly a day goes over his head that he is not in this young woman's company, and the Lord above only knows how far a headſtrong youth, inſtigated by paſſion, may puſh matters, more eſpecially as he generally meets her at one Signora Sporza's, a very pawky* gentlewoman, who underſtands

* Sly.

what's

what's what as well as any woman in Naples, and being the relation of the foreſaid Laura, will leave no ſtone unturned to get her linked to Mr. N—.

"I once had hopes, that as the young woman attends maſs regularly every day—for thoſe poor deluded creatures ſhew more zeal for their own ſuperſtition than ſome Proteſtants do for true religion—I had once hopes, I ſay, that ſhe might object to marrying a Proteſtant. But I am informed, that as the ſong is, *Her mother did ſo before her*, which has greatly diminiſhed my hopes of refuſal on her part; for it is natural to conclude that the mother has given the daughter a tincture of her own diſpoſition, and you know, Sir, that

Quo ſemel eſt imbuta recens, ſervabit odorem,
Teſta diu.

"I am ſure I need add no more to convince you of the miſery that ſuch a match as this would occaſion to all Mr. N—'s relations, particularly to his honoured aunt, who holds Antichriſt and all his adherents in the greateſt deteſtation. You muſt likewiſe

wiſe be ſenſible, that a popiſh wife, however fair her aſpect, muſt give but a dark proſpect to a Proteſtant huſband, inaſmuch as her religion inſtructs her that ſhe is not obliged to keep faith with heretics.—*Heu, quoties fidem mutatoſque Deos flebit!*

" Theſe reflections are ſo manifeſt, that you will wonder they do not occur to Mr. N—; but you muſt remember, that he is blinded by the miſt of paſſion, and in that ſtate people cannot perceive the force of reaſon;—*Quid enim ratione timemus aut cupimus.* Yet if you could find a plauſible pretext for deſiring Mr. N— to meet you at Rome, inſtead of allowing him to wait for you here at Naples, I am convinced he would obey your ſummons; and when he is removed from the opportunities of ſeeing this young woman, he may poſſibly be beyond the influence of her attraction, and above the wiles of her coadjutors; and you may then prevail upon him to liſten to the voice of reaſon, abandon this land of ſuperſtition and deluſion, where we have

ſojourned

ſojourned too long, and return directly to Britain; whereas it would be as eaſy to whiſtle the *lavrocks out of the lift**, as to make him agree to this propoſition while he remains within eye-ſhot of this ſame Laura Seidlits.

I am, with all due reſpect,
Hónoured Sir,
Your moſt obedient ſervant,
GEORGE BUCHANAN."

The gentleman to whom this letter was addreſſed had already received a hint from a friend of his at Naples to the ſame purpoſe; he therefore determined to follow Buchanan's advice, and actually wrote to his nephew, that it was not in his power to proceed to Naples as he had intended, and expreſſing a ſtrong deſire of ſeeing him and Mr. Steele at Rome.

However fond Mr. N— was of Laura's company, he could not think of allowing his uncle, for whom, independent of other conſiderations, he had a very great reſpect,

* The larks from the ſky.

to

to return to England without waiting on him; he therefore took his leave of Signora Sporza and her two friends a few days after receiving this letter, and he and Mr. Steele ſet out for Rome, accompanied by Buchanan and two footmen.

Signora Sporza told him at parting, That ſhe was herſelf engaged to a lady of her acquaintance, who had buſineſs of importance at Rome, to make that jaunt with her, ſo that ſhe expected very ſoon to have the pleaſure of meeting him in that city.

Squander, and two or three other young Engliſhmen, finding their time paſs a little heavily without Mr. N— and Steele, followed them on the third day after they ſet out.

CHAP. XLV.

L'hypocriſie eſt un hommage que le vice rend à la vertue. ROCHEFOUCAULT.

ZELUCO plainly perceived at their next meeting the ill ſucceſs of the Father's negotiation, in ſpite of the palliations with which it was communicated. As his hopes had been greatly raiſed, his diſappointment was great in proportion; his enraged ſpirit, unaccuſtomed to reſtraint, on this occaſion was deaf to the dictates of caution, and rejected the maſk of hypocriſy; he raved like a mad man, poured curſes on both mother and daughter, particularly the latter, on whom he vowed vengeance for what he termed her inſolence, and for all the trouble and vexation ſhe had given him.

Father Pedro croſſed himſelf, and began to repeat his Pater Noſter.

"Come,

"Come, come, Father," ſaid Zeluco, "do not let you and I keep up the farce with each other any longer. I know you have too much ſenſe to lay any ſtreſs on theſe mummeries; and I am not ſuch a fool as to think that a woman is to be won by croſſings or prayers."

"You have as good a chance that way, however," replied the Father, "as by ſwearing and raging like a fury."

"I will have her one way or another!" exclaimed Zeluco.

"And what way do you intend to take next?" ſaid Pedro.

"I'll have her by force.—I'll have her ſeized and carried aboard a veſſel.—I'll fly with her to Algiers! to the Weſt Indies! —any where!" exclaimed he with a loud voice, and ſtamping with his foot; "for ſhe ſhall be mine;—by all the Gods, ſhe ſhall!"

"Of all the Gods," ſaid Father Pedro calmly, "the God of Hell was the only one who was driven to the miſerable ſhift of committing a rape to get himſelf a wife;

a wife; do you intend to imitate *him*, Signor?"

"I do not care who I imitate," roared Zeluco, "were it the devil."

"In the preſent caſe, however, you will not even have the ſatisfaction of imitating him throughout; for although you may hurry *yourſelf* to hell, you have little chance of carrying the lady along with you. I would adviſe you, therefore, to adopt ſome leſs deſperate expedient."

"What expedient?" cried Zeluco; "I can think of none; I can hardly think at all.—But if thou canſt aſſiſt me in obtaining this woman, thou wilt eternally oblige me, Prieſt; and thou ſhalt have money enough to build a church."

Although Zeluco in his rage thus threw himſelf open, and put himſelf in ſome degree in the Father's power, the latter was reſolved not to follow his example, and put himſelf in Zeluco's. He plainly perceived, indeed, that Zeluco did not imagine that he had acted from motives of piety; but whatever ſuſpicions he might entertain,

Pedro conſidered that there was ſome difference between being ſuſpected of a villany, and actually avowing it; he therefore aſſured Zeluco, that he would have no farther connexion with him in this buſineſs, and that he would inform againſt him if he made any criminal attempt on Laura. He acknowledged, he ſaid, that as he had thought his marriage with that young lady would be happy for both, and agreeable to the worthy lady her mother, beſides conducing to other good purpoſes, he ſhould have been extremely happy to have promoted it; but after the furious and unwarrantable projects he had juſt heard of, he deſired to have no more to do with it, directly or indirectly.

This calm remonſtrance brought Zeluco to his ſenſes; he now perceived that the perſon he had to deal with, and whoſe aſſiſtance he ſtill thought might be of uſe, was of too wary a character to act without a cover, to which he might retreat on occaſion.

After a little recollection he replied, in conciliating terms, "Surely, Father, you cannot imagine that what has eſcaped me in a moment of paſſion is my ſerious intention; my own reflections would very ſoon have convinced me of the folly and wickedneſs of an attempt which your prudence has in an inſtant put in a juſt light. I think myſelf moſt happy in ſuch a friend on whoſe wiſdom I may rely, and whoſe counſels I ſhall ever be ready to follow. My love and reſpect for the virtuous young lady is ſuch, that I will uſe every lawful means in my power to obtain her hand. I know the well-placed confidence which ſhe has in you, and I moſt earneſtly beg that you will uſe your influence with her in my favour. In the mean time, my dear Father, I am ſenſible of the trouble which I give you; and as the only way in which you permit me to ſhew my gratitude is by enabling you to extend your benevolence to the deſerving and the neceſſitous, I beg you will accept of this, which you will apply to whatever pious purpoſe you think proper."

proper:"—So ſaying, he put a purſe of ſequins into the Father's hands, aſſuring him of double the ſum, independent of what he had already promiſed, on the ſucceſsful concluſion of the buſineſs.

"Now, my ſon," replied the Monk, "you talk rationally; and reaſon always ſuggeſts a mode of action oppoſite to what is prompted by rage. You have already gained the good opinion of the young lady's mother; pleaſe to recollect how you gained it; not by violence, but by gentleneſs, by rendering her an eſſential ſervice: and although the young woman herſelf ſeems indiſpoſed towards you, yet who knows what a ſenſe of gratitude might do?—it might have the ſame effect on the daughter that it has had on the mother. The laſt obligation you laid on the family was of a pecuniary nature, which is more apt to make an impreſſion on an old heart than on a young; but there are obligations which make deeper impreſſions on young hearts than on old."

"What obligations are thoſe? I am ready to do whatever you direct."

"Opportunities of this kind may occur," ſaid the Father, "and then your own good ſenſe will direct you how to profit by them. In your rage you propoſed methods the moſt likely to make her deteſt you, and love thoſe who ſhould have the good fortune to free her from you; you ſpoke not like yourſelf, but like a *robber*, like a *raviſher*. A man who attempted what you threatened would draw upon himſelf her juſt hatred, whereas he who did the reverſe, who had the good fortune to ſave her from ſuch an attempt, might probably gain her love."

Having ſaid this in a very ſignificant manner, Father Pedro took his leave. In ſpite of Zeluco's endeavours to prevail on him to be more explicit, after remaining for ſome time in profound meditation, "He who has the good fortune," ſaid he, repeating to himſelf the words which Pedro had pronounced with emphaſis; "he who has the

the good fortune to ſave her from ſuch an attempt might probably gain her heart.—Who can make ſuch an attempt?—How can I deliver her from dangers to which ſhe is not expoſed?"

He conjectured however, that the Father meant to convey a hint to him reſpecting ſome emergency which he knew would occur, although he was reſolved not to be farther explicit; and determined to obſerve his words and actions attentively, in the hopes of diſcovering his meaning more clearly.

Two days after, he was able more fully to comprehend the Father's idea; when he informed Zeluco that he had juſt left Madame de Seidlits and her daughter; that Laura having often expreſſed a curioſity to viſit Mount Veſuvius, her mother, who had formerly oppoſed it, had now agreed to it, on his offering to accompany her and Signora Sporza; that accordingly he, and theſe two ladies were to dine next day at Portici, viſit the mountain in the evening, and return to Naples the ſame night.—"If you are eager to be of the party," added

he, "I will endeavour to obtain the ladies conſent."

Zeluco, engroſſed by reflection, did not give an immediate anſwer.

"But I know," continued the Father, "you have been there already; and poſſibly do not chuſe to return again."

"Pray, my good Father," ſaid Zeluco, rouſing from his reverie, "at what hour do you propoſe returning to town?"

"It is impoſſible to ſay exactly," replied Father Pedro; "I dare ſay it will be late enough, for I find Signora Laura wiſhes to ſee the exploſions to the greateſt advantage; but I perceive we cannot have you. I ſhall not, however, inform the ladies that I made you the propoſal, or that you ſo much as know of the expedition, leſt they ſhould accuſe you of want of gallantry. Adieu. I can ſtay no longer at preſent."

"What ſervants do you take with you?" reſumed Zeluco.

"I really do not know," ſaid the Father; "but I muſt be excuſed, I cannot ſtay any longer now;—one of my penitents

tents waits for me.—Servants!—let me ſee —there will be no need of many ſervants. I preſume we ſhall have only Giacomo. The muleteers will be with us till we regain the carriage; and then we ſhall have only the coachman and Giacomo to attend us to town. Saying this, the cautious Monk hurried away, leaving Zeluco ſatisfied reſpecting the meaning of his former hints.

CHAP. XLVI.

——Revenge, at firſt thought ſweet,
Bitter ere long, back on itſelf recoils.
MILTON.

ZELUCO now determined to plan an attack on the ladies as they returned from the mountain, to drive off the aſſailants, and aſſume the merit with Laura of having ſaved her from robbery and aſſaſſination.

Having communicated his deſign to his valet-de-chambre, the confidant and accomplice of many of his villanies; the ſcheme ſeemed practicable and ſafe in all reſpects, except in the neceſſity which appeared of employing many agents. The valet however undertook the buſineſs with the aſſiſtance of only one perſon, and ſpoke with a confidence of ſucceſs ſeldom acquired otherwiſe than by experience in ſimilar ſcenes.

Being

Being now convinced of Signora Sporza's diſlike to him, and having a violent ſuſpicion that it was through her means that Laura was ſo ill diſpoſed towards him, Zeluco expreſſed ſome anxiety with regard to Signora Sporza, leſt ſhe might ſuſpect the ſource of the attempt.—The valet aſſured him, that *ſhe* ſhould be particularly attended to, for he would order his companion to fire his piſtol ſo cloſe to her ear, that though charged only with powder, it would confound her ſufficiently to prevent her from making obſervations, and terrify the reſt of the company into non-reſiſtance.

This ſuggeſted a horrid piece of wickedneſs to the vengeful mind of Zeluco, which however he did not communicate to the valet; but next day, when he underſtood that every thing was arranged, he deſired to ſee the piſtol with which the man was to arm his companion:—"You are certain it is charged with powder only," ſaid he. "I am very certain," replied the valet; "for I charged it myſelf." "Let the fellow fire then directly at her head; this will

will frighten her into ſilence," ſaid Zeluco, "and render every thing eaſy."—He then gave him very particular directions in what manner they were to behave to Laura; and, ſending the valet to fetch ſomething from a diſtant part of the houſe, he ſlipt two bullets into the piſtol: the hatred and thirſt of revenge, which burned in his breaſt, againſt Signora Sporza, overcoming his caution, and prompting him to a meaſure which might have produced a diſcovery of the whole plan.

Before theſe two emiſſaries ſet out, Zeluco again repeated to the valet not to allow his companion to touch Laura, but to pull Signora Sporza entirely out of the carriage, and then fire the piſtol in her face, which would be the ſignal for Zeluco himſelf to make his appearance.

In the evening Zeluco waited on Madame de Seidlits, where he found Father Mulo; he affected great ſurpriſe when ſhe told him that her daughter, Signora Sporza, and Father Pedro had ſet out that ſame morning on an expedition to Mount Veſuvius;

vius; and that they were not as yet returned.

When the night advanced without their appearing, Madame de Seidlits became uneaſy; the noiſe of every carriage gave her hopes that it was theirs; and every diſappointment when the carriage paſſed increaſed her uneaſineſs.

When Madame de Seidlits firſt began to expreſs her apprehenſion, Zeluco withdrew on pretence of an engagement; and Father Mulo remained, as he ſaid himſelf, to comfort Madame de Seidlits, in caſe any misfortune ſhould really have happened to Laura and the reſt of the party.

Madame de Seidlits had heard, in general, of people being ſometimes hurt by the fall of the ſubſtances exploded from the mountain: her alarmed imagination prompted her to make particular inquiries on this ſubject; and Father Mulo's retentive memory ſupplied her with every inſtance of that kind which had happened for many years back; but he added, at the cloſe of every example, that ſuch a misfortune having happened

happened to the people he mentioned, could not be conſidered as a poſitive proof that the ſame had befallen any of the company for whom ſhe was ſo much intereſted; and if the like had happened to *ſome of them*, ſtill it was poſſible that Laura was not the unfortunate perſon: "For which reaſon," added he, "my dear Madam, you ought to keep yourſelf in perfect tranquillity, and hope for the beſt; becauſe vexing yourſelf will be of no manner of uſe, but is rather a tempting of Providence, and may draw down upon your head the very misfortune you dread, or ſome other as bad." By ſuch reaſoning Father Mulo endeavoured, with uninterrupted perſeverance, to quiet her fears.

What effect this method of conveying comfort might have produced on the mind of Madame de Seidlits can never be known, for her imagination was too much alarmed to permit her to attend to his diſcourſe: beſides, although it may ſeem a bold word, no eccleſiaſtic ever poſſeſſed the faculty of ſpeaking without being liſtened to in greater

er perfection than the reverend Father Mulo.

On leaving Madame de Seidlits, Zeluco mounted his horſe, and rode directly towards the place which he had fixed on for the attack. Having perceived his emiſſaries in waiting, he turned his horſe without ſeeming to take notice of them, and rode ſlowly backwards and forwards till he ſaw the carriage coming briſkly along. The valet and his companion, with maſks on their faces, riding furiouſly up to the carriage, ordered the driver to ſtop on pain of having his brains blown out; the driver inſtantly obeyed, and Giacomo fell from his horſe on his knees, ſupplicating for mercy in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt; to whom, after he had recovered his recollection a little, he added St. Januarius.—Father Pedro alſo prayed with much ſeeming fervency, invoking the aid of St. Dominic, and a whole hoſt of other ſaints.

After the valet had taken the ladies purſes, which were inſtantly preſented to him, the other

other fellow dragged Signora Sporza out of the chaiſe; ſhe exclaimed that every thing had been delivered to them, and attempted to get into the carriage again; but the fellow, ſtanding between her and it, preſented his piſtol, which flaſhed without going off. Zeluco ſeeing the flaſh, and hearing the ſcreams of Laura, galloped towards the carriage, hollowing, and threatening the aſſailants with immediate death if they did not deſiſt; but the fellow, whoſe piſtol had ſnapped, fearing that he ſhould not be thought to have performed his part properly, if he did not actually fire it, cocked it once more, and fired it off in ſuch a hurried manner, that both the bullets paſſed the head of Signora Sporza, and one of them lodged in Zeluco's ſhoulder.

This ſtaggered him a little; but the attackers flying, he came up to the carriage in time to prevent Laura from rolling out of it; ſhe had retained her preſence of mind while ſhe conſidered the aſſailants ſimply as robbers; and after delivering their money, ſeeing Signora Sporza pulled violently

violently out of the carriage, ſhe called to Father Pedro to aſſiſt her; but on hearing the piſtol fired, which ſhe imagined had killed her friend, ſhe fainted in the chaiſe. Signora Sporza alſo was greatly alarmed; but ſeeing the aggreſſors fly, ſhe roſe from her knees, on which ſhe had ſunk when the piſtol was fired, and aſſiſted Zeluco and Father Pedro in their endeavours to recover Laura, who, as ſoon as ſhe recogniſed Signora Sporza and the Father, and underſtood that the danger was over, exclaimed, "What bleſſed angel has delivered us from the ruffians?" Father Pedro immediately anſwered, "We all owe our deliverance to Signor Zeluco."—"Signor Zeluco!" cried Laura, with painful ſurpriſe. "Yes, my daughter," added he; "and here he is to receive our grateful acknowledgments."—"We are all highly indebted to you, Signor," ſaid ſhe: "How providential was your coming!" added Father Pedro.—"Conſidering the hour of the night," ſaid Signora Sporza "his coming ſeems miraculouſly ſo."

Zeluco then informed them how he was induced to meet them; that as he drew near the carriage, hearing the ſhrieks of Signora Laura, he had rode up to the ruffians, one of whom, he ſaid, he could have taken, had he not been more anxious to relieve them than to ſeize him.

The driver and Giacomo having now recovered from their terror, the carriage was prepared, and the company moved towards the town. Giacomo told the driver as they went, that he had made an obſervation which he would communicate to him as a friend, becauſe it might be of uſe on future occaſions of the ſame nature; it was this: that while he continued to implore the firſt three perſons to whom he had addreſſed his prayers, no interpoſition had been made in his favour; but that as ſoon as he began to implore the protection of St. Januarius, Signor Zeluco had appeared for the reſcue of the company. "*Certo*," ſaid the coachman, "St. Januarius takes the greateſt care of all his votaries on Mount Veſuvius and the neighbouring diſtrict, *ad ogni*

ogni uccello ſuo nido è bello; but out of ſight of the mountain, he aſſured Giacomo that St. Januarius was as regardleſs of prayers as his neighbours, and not more to be depended upon than thoſe he complained of.

When the company arrived at the houſe of Madame de Seidlits, Father Mulo was giving her a circumſtantial account of a robbery with aſſaſſination, which happened many years before on the road between Portici and Naples; and, as he with wonderful accuracy remarked, looking at his watch, much about the hour in which he was then ſpeaking; he alſo detailed the providential manner in which the murderer was diſcovered, and how he was broke on the wheel, to the edification, as Father Mulo expreſſed himſelf, of all the beholders, and the great comfort of the murdered perſon's widow.

The powerful faculty hinted above, which the Father poſſeſſed, and which ſhone with peculiar luſtre in narrative, prevented theſe anecdotes from affecting Madame de Seidlits ſo much as they would

otherwiſe have done. The ſight of the company which now entered her houſe relieved her, however, from a ſet of very diſagreeable reflexions.

Father Pedro, in the preſence of the ladies, gave her the hiſtory of their adventure, in which the generous intrepidity of Signor Zeluco made a conſpicuous figure; and the watchful care of Providence in ſending him to their deliverance was mentioned in the moſt pious terms.

Madame de Seidlits then poured out the grateful effuſions of her heart in thanks to Zeluco, who modeſtly acknowledged that, on ſeeing her alarmed at the ladies not returning, and being himſelf exceedingly uneaſy, he had on leaving her immediately mounted his horſe, and galloped towards Portici, which he ſhould ever conſider as the moſt fortunate incident of his life, with whatever conſequence the accident which had happened to himſelf ſhould be attended.

"Accident!" cried Madame de Seidlits; "What accident?"—and then perceiving blood

blood on his clothes,—"Alas! Signor," ſaid ſhe, "you are wounded! ſend directly for a ſurgeon!"

Father Pedro, who, notwithſtanding the blood, had reaſons of his own for thinking that he was not at all, or in no dangerous degree hurt, ſaid it would be beſt that Zeluco were removed to his own houſe, where the wound would be examined more conveniently, and propoſed to accompany him immediately.

Madame de Seidlits, wringing her hands in the utmoſt grief, begged that all poſſible care might be taken of him; for ſhe ſhould never again know comfort if any accident ſhould accrue to ſo worthy a man, particularly, added ſhe, looking to Laura, on ſuch an occaſion.

Her daughter, with more compoſure, but with viſible emotion, begged of Father Pedro not to leave Zeluco till his wound was dreſſed, which ſhe hoped would not be found dangerous.

Father Mulo deſired Zeluco to be of good cheer, for Heaven *ſeldom* permitted villany

of this kind to paſs unpuniſhed; but that in caſe this wound ſhould prove mortal, he might *rely upon it*, that the planners of ſuch a daring attack would be brought to open ſhame; for, ſooner or later, murders were always diſcovered.

Signora Sporza obſerved to Zeluco, who by this time was not the leaſt alarmed in the company, that the wound could not be dangerous, as he had been able to ſit on horſeback while they were coming to town.

Zeluco was then put into a carriage, and ſlowly tranſported to his own houſe, accompanied by Father Pedro, who did not chuſe to make any particular inquiry, nor to expreſs the ſurpriſe he really felt at there being a wound at all; for, as the carriage went ſlowly, he was afraid of being overheard by the ſervant that walked by its ſide. The wounded man himſelf was ſilent, except that once he muttered, "Damn the awkward blockhead!" and afterwards, "What a curſed blunder!"

As

As ſoon as he was placed in his own bed-chamber, "Is the ſurgeon come?" ſaid he to Father Pedro.

"Do you really wiſh for a ſurgeon?" ſaid the Father.

"Certainly; don't you ſee how I bleed?"

"I ſee blood; but I had hopes it was not from your veins."

"It is a curſed buſineſs: pray ſend for a ſurgeon," cried Zeluco impatiently.—This was done accordingly.

The valet and his accomplice had returned before Zeluco had even reached the town. The former, on hearing that a ſurgeon was ſent for, and ſeeing blood on his maſter's arm, was aſtoniſhed, and cried, "How is it poſſible, Sir, that you can be wounded? For——"

"Peace, babbler," ſaid Zeluco.

"Can any thing be more natural," ſaid Father Pedro, with a ſarcaſtical ſmile, "than for piſtols to make wounds, eſpecially when fired by two ſuch bloody-minded ruffians? But I muſt now leave you, Signor; you may depend on my prayers for your reco-

very, and that you may ſoon reap the fruits of your generous valour." He then withdrew, convinced that the wound was fictitious, and invented as a natural incident on the farce, which would be better acted by the maſter, the ſervant, and the ſurgeon, without his taking any part.

CHAP. XLVII.

A Medical Conſultation.

AS Father Pedro went out, a Phyſician and Surgeon entered the room together. It was found that the bullet had entered the arm, near the ſhoulder, and without having injured the bone or joint, was felt beneath the ſkin on the oppoſite ſide.

It was extracted without difficulty after an inciſion. The Doctor and Surgeon then retired to another room to conſult. The latter was a Frenchman of ſome humour, a conſiderable ſhare of ſhrewdneſs, and much of a coxcomb.

"This wound is nothing," ſaid the Doctor.

"We muſt try to make *ſomething* of it however," replied the Surgeon.

"It will heal of itſelf directly," reſumed the Doctor.

"It

"It muſt therefore not be left to itſelf," ſaid the Surgeon.

"What farther do you intend?" ſaid the Phyſician; "little more ſeems neceſſary, except applying ſome freſh lint every day."

"*Laſcia far' a Marc Antonio*," replied the Surgeon, "I will take care that his Excellency ſhall not be expoſed to danger on the high road for at leaſt a month to come."

"Unleſs it be to preſcribe ſome cooling phyſic, and ſuch a low regimen as will prevent his ſuffering from want of exerciſe, I can do nothing," ſaid the Phyſician.

"That is doing a great deal," ſaid the Surgeon; "it keeps the patient in low ſpirits, and renders him obedient."

"But after all, how do you intend to treat the wound itſelf?" ſaid the Phyſician.

"I intend to treat it *ſecundum artem*," replied the Surgeon.

"*Benè, benè reſpondiſti*," ſaid the Phyſician; "and ſo much for the wound.—Now, pray what ſay you to the news?"

continued the Phyſician; "they talk of a Ruſſian fleet in the Mediterranean."

"Whether that will take place or not," ſaid the Surgeon, "depends entirely on the king's pleaſure."

"How ſo?" ſaid the Phyſician; "how can his majeſty prevent it?"

"By threatening to ſink them if they preſumed to enter the Streights," replied the Surgeon. "The Toulon fleet will be ſufficient."

"Toulon fleet!" cried the Phyſician; "why, what king do you mean?"

"Why, the king of France to be ſure," replied the Surgeon; "What other king *can* I mean?"

"*Vi prego di ſcuſarmi*, Signor," cried the Phyſician; "but in ſpeaking of the king *in* Naples, I thought the king *of* Naples might perhaps be meant."

"*A fe di Dio*, Signor," replied the Surgeon; "*non m'è venuto mai in penſiero*; but I believe," added he, looking at his watch, "our conſultation has laſted a decent time enough."

The

The Phyſician being of the ſame opinion, they returned to the patient's bed-chamber. The Doctor ordered a low diet, and cooling ptiſans in great abundance.

"What do you think of the wound?" ſaid Zeluco to the Surgeon.

"It would be raſh to ſpeak deciſively at the very firſt dreſſing, Signor," ſaid the Surgeon.

"But what is your general notion?" reſumed Zeluco.

"Why, Signor, if my friend here will anſwer for keeping down the fever, I will do my beſt to ſave your Excellency's arm."

"Save my arm!" exclaimed Zeluco; "I would rather be damned than loſe my arm, Sir."

"That may be, Signor," ſaid the Surgeon, "but people are not always allowed their choice on ſuch occaſions."

"Zounds, Sir!" exclaimed Zeluco; "do you think there is any danger of my loſing my arm?"

"I am determined to ſave it, if poſſible," ſaid the Surgeon, "and it will afford me great pleaſure to ſucceed."

Here

Here the Phyſician interfering, begged of Zeluco to be compoſed, for nothing retarded the cure of wounds more than impatience; he hoped, by the great ſkill of his friend, every thing would terminate to his ſatisfaction, provided he would be reſigned, and follow the directions that from time to time would be given him.

With much internal chagrin, Zeluco was obliged to aſſume the appearance of ſerenity, and he promiſed to obey the injunctions of thoſe two learned gentlemen.

CHAP. XLVIII.

The French Surgeon.

THE following day the Phyſician and Surgeon did not think it expedient to take the dreſſings from the wound, but renewed their injunctions that Zeluco ſhould be kept exceedingly quiet, take his medicines punctually, and ſtrictly adhere to the cooleſt regimen. As the wound now was more painful than at firſt, the patient became apprehenſive of loſing his arm, and complied with the directions given, though not without breaking out frequently into violent execrations on the unlucky chance by which he was reduced to the neceſſity of ſuffering ſuch penance.

Madame de Seidlits had ſent a meſſage, deſiring that the Surgeon might call at her houſe when he left his patient.

He went accordingly, and found Father Mulo with her.

"I am

"I am extremely happy, Madam," ſaid the Surgeon, "to have this opportunity of paying you my devoirs; it is an honour I have long wiſhed for. I perceive, by the brilliancy of your looks, that you are in charming health."

"Pray, Sir," ſaid Madame de Seidlits, with impatience, "how do you find ——?"

"I aſk you ten thouſand pardons, Madam, for interrupting you," ſaid the Surgeon; "but I beg to know, before you proceed, how the amiable and accompliſhed young lady your daughter does?"

"My daughter is very well, Sir," anſwered Madame de Seidlits; "now will you be ſo obliging——"

"You may command whatever is in my power, Madam," ſaid the Surgeon, bowing very low.

"Then pray tell me, Sir, how you left your patient."

"I have a great many patients, Madam; but I preſume your Ladyſhip inquires, at preſent, for Signor Zeluco."

"I do,

"I do, Sir, and earneſtly beg to know how you left him?"

"Much better than I found him, Madam—I have cut a bullet out of him."

"Poor gentleman!" cried Madame de Seidlits.

"He is not the poorer for that, Madam," ſaid the Surgeon; "he is a great gainer by what has been taken from him."

"I hope he is in no manner of danger?" ſaid Father Mulo, who was ſtill with her.

"Alas! Father," ſaid the Surgeon, "how often are our hopes fallacious:—a heretic hopes to go to Heaven, which is impoſſible: is it not, Father?"

"That certainly *is* impoſſible," ſaid Mulo.

"I knew," continued the Surgeon, "that you would be fully convinced of that great and comfortable truth."

"But you do not think this poor gentleman in danger?" ſaid Madame de Seidlits.

"A perſon of your Ladyſhip's excellent underſtanding muſt know," replied the Surgeon,

Surgeon, "that gun-ſhot wounds are often attended with danger."

"This is only a piſtol-ſhot wound," ſaid Father Mulo.

"Very judiciouſly obſerved, Father," ſaid the Surgeon; "*that* certainly makes a difference; it happens unluckily, however, that even piſtol-ſhot wounds prove ſometimes mortal."

"The bullet, I underſtand, paſſed through his arm *only*," ſaid Father Mulo.

"Had it paſſed through his heart *alſo*, it would have been more dangerous to be ſure, Father," ſaid the Surgeon.

"You have extracted the ball—I think you ſaid ſo, Sir?" reſumed Madame de Seidlits.

"I have, Madam, and quite in the manner recommended by Monſ. Lewis at Paris; it is by much the ſafeſt. I never made a ſweeter inciſion in my life."

"It muſt have been very painful," ſaid Madame de Seidlits, ſhrinking like one who ſuffers.

"Painful!—not in the leaſt, Madam!" replied the Surgeon; "I performed it with the greateſt eaſe."

"I imagine," ſaid Father Mulo, "the lady meant, that the operation muſt have been painful to the *patient*."

"To the *patient*; Oho!" cried the Surgeon; "your Ladyſhip ſpoke of the *patient*,—did you?"

"I did indeed, Sir; I fear he ſuffered a great deal," ſaid Madame de Seidlits.

"Why, yes, a good deal perhaps, though I ſhould think not a vaſt deal neither.—I have ſeen many ſuffer more;—in ſhort, there is no knowing," ſaid the Surgeon, careleſsly; then added with earneſtneſs, "but of this I do aſſure you, Madam, that Monſieur Lewis's method is by much the beſt. I had the honour of being a favourite eleve of his—and, in ſome inſtances, have improved on his ideas."

"I dare ſay, Sir," ſaid Madame de Seidlits, willing that he ſhould withdraw, "you will do all that can be done for this gentleman

tleman: I ſhall be glad to know how he is after the next dreſſing. I have heard your ſkill much commended."

"You are extremely polite and obliging, Madam," ſaid the Surgeon, bowing: "your Ladyſhip, no doubt, has paſſed ſome time at Paris?"

"I never did, Sir; I ſhall expect to hear from you to-morrow."

"I am ſurpriſed at that," ſaid the Surgeon; "I could have ſworn that you had lived a conſiderable time at Paris."

"Pray, Sir," reſumed Father Mulo, "will you be kind enough, before you go, to ſay whether or not you think this gentleman's wound will be long in healing; for I have not yet been able to gather from your diſcourſe what your opinion is."

"The art of ſurgery, my good Father," replied the Surgeon, "conſiſts in healing wounds *well* and *radically*, not ſoon and ſuperficially; the laſt is the art of charlatans."

"I honour the art of ſurgery, Sir," ſaid Madame de Seidlits; "it is one of the moſt

uſeful that mankind poſſeſs, and particularly ſo to the braveſt claſs of mankind."

"Your politeneſs can only be equalled by your excellent underſtanding, Madam," ſaid the Surgeon. "The art of ſurgery is not only the moſt uſeful and moſt honourable, but alſo the moſt ancient of all the arts; it can boaſt higher antiquity than the art of medicine itſelf."

"Perhaps it may be ſo," ſaid Madame de Seidlits.

"I will have the honour of proving it to your Ladyſhip," ſaid the Surgeon; then coughing and adjuſting himſelf like one going to make a formal harangue, he began—"The earlieſt race of mankind—"

"I am fully convinced it is as you aſſert," ſaid Madame de Seidlits, interrupting him; "but I muſt really beg your forgiveneſs for being obliged to leave you at preſent. You will be ſo good as to let me know how your patient does after the next dreſſing?—Your humble ſervant, Sir.—Adieu, Father."

When Madame de Seidlits was withdrawn: "Is it poſſible," cried the Surgeon, "that this lady was never at Paris?"

"She never was, I aſſure you," replied Father Mulo.

"That ſeems very extraordinary," ſaid the Surgeon.

"I had a notion," reſumed the Father, "that there was a conſiderable number of people in the world who never were at Paris."

"Your reverence's notions are all wonderfully well founded," ſaid the Surgeon; "but my ſurpriſe at preſent proceeds from my not being able to conjecture where or how Madame de Seidlits could acquire ſo much politeneſs and liberality of ſentiment."

"She was educated in a convent," ſaid the Father.

"That clears up the matter at once," ſaid the Surgeon; "for ſo were you, Father, and yet perhaps you never were at Paris no more than the lady."

"Never in my whole life," anſwered Father Mulo.

"Nor at Moſcow, neither?" added the Surgeon.

"No, never," anſwered the Father; "though I have *heard* a good deal about *Muſcovy*, particularly of late."

"O, you have?" ſaid the Surgeon.

"I have, indeed," anſwered Father Mulo; "ſome people tell me it is larger than Naples. What is your opinion?"

"About what?" ſaid the Surgeon; "I fear I do not quite underſtand what your reverence means."

"I only aſked which you believed to be the largeſt city, Naples or Muſcovy?"

"Why, I ſhould think Naples the moſt populous," anſwered the Surgeon, "though Muſcovy ſtands upon rather more ground."

"I had ſome ſuſpicion of that kind myſelf," ſaid Father Mulo.

CHAP. XLIX.

An Anodyne Sermon.

Impediat verbis laſſas onerantibus aures. HOR.

WHEN Madame de Seidlits left Father Mulo and the Surgeon, it was partly to get free of the loquacity of the latter; and alſo becauſe Laura, who did not chuſe to appear herſelf, waited with impatience to know the Surgeon's opinion of Zeluco. That young lady had paſſed a very diſturbed night, owing, in ſome meaſure, to the fright, but more to the uneaſineſs ſhe felt on account of Zeluco's wound, or perhaps rather on account of the occaſion on which he had received it; for it is more than probable that Laura would have felt leſs concern had he received the ſame wound in any other cauſe. Of all mankind the perſon ſhe wiſhed leaſt to be obliged to was Zeluco.

Madame de Seidlits having perceived her daughter's anxiety, although ſhe had herſelf been agitated by the alarming manner in which the Surgeon had ſpoken, affected a degree of compoſure which ſhe had not, and ſpoke to Laura as if there were no doubt of his recovery; ſhe afterwards deſired Signora Sporza and Father Mulo to talk the ſame language to her. The former did ſo naturally; for there appeared ſomething myſterious and ſuſpicious to her in the whole adventure, and ſhe never once believed him in any danger.

Father Pedro viſited Zeluco daily, but never thought proper to aſk any particular explanation of the accident by which he was wounded; nor did the latter ever talk to him but on the general ſuppoſition that the attack had been made by real robbers. Yet they ſo far talked without diſguiſe to each other, that the Father informed Zeluco of Laura's diſtreſs on his account, the mother's precaution in ſoftening the accounts of his illneſs to her daughter, adviſing Zeluco, as the beſt means of keeping alive the

the intereſt which that young lady took in him, that he ſhould not be in too great a hurry to announce his perfect recovery; and declaring, at the ſame time, that he had better hopes than ever of his ſucceſs.

Several days after the adventure, Father Pedro found the three ladies together, and endeavouring to ſuit the account he gave of Zeluco with the ſentiments he wiſhed to inſpire, he ſaid, That, for his part, he did not know what to think of Signor Zeluco's ſtate of health; that ſometimes the Surgeon imagined the wound diſpoſed to heal, that ſoon after he declared that it had a worſe appearance, and threatened the moſt dangerous conſequences. But what gave him the greateſt uneaſineſs was, that the Phyſician, a man of great ſkill and penetration, had told him, that he ſuſpected ſome ſecret anxiety of mind preyed upon his patient, producing a ſlow fever, which gradually undermined his ſtrength, and deſtroyed the effect of the medicines; and he was much afraid would render a wound, which might otherwiſe have been

cured,

cured, the apparent cauſe of his diſſolution. Madame de Seidlits threw a look at Laura, as the Father pronounced theſe words, and the young lady herſelf betrayed ſymptoms of great emotion.—"Avaunt, thou prophet of evil!" cried Signora Sporza, with an air of raillery, "ſee you not that this audience cannot bear a ſermon from the Lamentations of Jeremiah? Nor is there need for ſuch gloomy forebodings. I will be anſwerable for it, that our heroic Knight Errant's wound will heal in due time, in ſpite of the ſecret ſorrow which preys on his tender heart."

Signora Sporza continued to ſlight every idea of danger, and endeavoured to keep up the ſpirits of her friends, which ſeemed ready to ſink under the artful inſinuations of Father Pedro.

Signora Sporza, in conſequence of the engagement above mentioned, ſet out for Rome with her companion a few days after this converſation, having taken an affectionate leave of her two friends, both of whom were a little hurt at the want of concern ſhe diſplayed

diſplayed on account of the illneſs of Zeluco, who, they imagined, merited more regard from her than ſhe was willing to allow.

When ſhe departed, Father Pedro circulated, without reſtraint, ſuch reports as he thought would anſwer his purpoſe. One day Madame de Seidlits was told, that Zeluco was a little better, the next a great deal worſe; at one time it was given out, that the ſurgeon feared it might be neceſſary to amputate his arm as the beſt means of ſaving his life; and the Father was always at hand to lament, that his generous intrepidity ſhould be attended with ſuch conſequences.

One day he filled Madame de Seidlits's mind with the greateſt apprehenſions for Zeluco's life; aſſerting that the agony of his wound was excruciating; that he had not ſlept for the three laſt nights, and that the fever threatened his brain.—"What a benevolent and liberal friend," exclaimed the Father, "are the poor about to loſe!"

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And ſo he left both the mother and daughter in very great concern.

He had hinted to Zeluco himſelf, that he intended to give this impreſſion, that he might act accordingly, and give ſuitable anſwers to all inquiries made about his health. The Father's view was to imprint, in the firſt place, a ſtrong degree of compaſſion in the breaſt of Laura, in the hope that this would render her more favourable towards Zeluco; and he purpoſed returning that ſame evening to the ladies with exaggerated accounts of Zeluco's tortures, which, by totally depriving him of ſleep, augmented the fever; and when he ſhould perceive Laura's compaſſion ſtrongly intereſted, he intended again to urge his ſuit in the hopes of obtaining ſome favourable declaration from Laura, in the event of Zeluco's recovery.

This ſhrewd plan, however, was a little deranged. Father Mulo called on Madame de Seidlits two hours after Pedro had left her. When he had ſat a little while, ſhe

begged

begged he would be ſo obliging as to pay a viſit to Signor Zeluco, endeavour to ſee him, and return afterwards to her; for his caſe, as ſhe was informed, altered every hour, and ſhe did not know whoſe account to depend upon. Laura joined in this requeſt, that ſhe might be relieved from the reverend Father's converſation, which ſhe had always felt uncommonly oppreſſive.

Father Mulo's connection with Madame de Seidlits's family was known to all Zeluco's ſervants; therefore, although they had received orders to admit nobody to his chamber except the medical people and Father Pedro, yet they imagined that Father Mulo was meant to be comprehended in the exception. He was accordingly introduced.

But as Zeluco expected no ſuch viſit, he was not exactly in the ſituation he would have choſen, had he known of the Father's coming. The wine and ſweet-meats which were on the table had been placed there on Father Pedro's account, who was always pleaſed to find a collation of that kind

ready

ready arranged when he called. Father Mulo expreſſed great ſatisfaction at ſeeing him look ſo much better than he expected, adding, That it would afford conſolation to his friends, particularly to Madame de Seidlits, when he ſhould inform them how well he looked.

"Alas! Father," ſaid Zeluco, "nothing is more deceitful than looks. I am in continual pain. I have not ſlept at all for theſe three nights. The phyſician thinks I might be better if I could get ſome ſleep; but nothing he orders has the effect, the agony of my arm is ſo violent. Oh!—"

"You had beſt take a glaſs of wine; allow me to help you," ſaid the Father.

"I dare not taſte wine," replied Zeluco; "but I beg you will help yourſelf to ſome; and pray, my good Father, try at the ſame time, if you can, to taſte thoſe biſcuits; you ſeem fatigued with walking in this ſultry weather. There is a napkin to dry you with; you are in a very violent perſpiration. Pray take another glaſs of wine.—I will endeavour to ſuppreſs my complaints while

while you refresh yourself. The *lachryma Christi* is excellent; do taste it."

Father Mulo acknowledged that he was indeed very much fatigued, having visited many penitents that morning, and walked a great deal. After he had ate and drank very plentifully, thinking himself bound to repay Zeluco for his agreeable repast, he prepared to do it in the most ample manner in the only coin he ever carried about with him, a consolatory exhortation. He turned, therefore, from the bufet, and addressed himself to Zeluco in these words: "The accident which has befallen you, my dear son, in all human probability, is the most fortunate that could have happened; you have had time during your confinement to reflect on your past life, and to repent of your manifold iniquities. As for the pain, it is temporary and trivial in comparison of the pangs which sinners endure in purgatory. Of what account are the frivolous enjoyments of sense? of what avail are all sublunary—?" &c. &c. &c.

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In this ſtrain and with an uniform monotonous voice, mightily reſembling the drone of a bee, the Father continued his harangue with wonderful perſeverance and ſhut eyes, as was his cuſtom when he prayed and admoniſhed. It is difficult to ſay how long he might have continued, had he not been ſurpriſed into a full ſtop, in the midſt of a ſentence full of unction, by the ſnoring of Zeluco; who, unwilling to interrupt the relation of Laura, and unable to attend to what he ſaid, had been long lulled into ſleep by the lethargic hum of his voice.

Father Mulo, opening his eyes, perceived the ſituation of Zeluco. As it was no ways uncommon to the Father to find many of his audience in the ſame condition at the end of his ſermons, he betrayed no marks of ſurpriſe on the preſent occaſion; but after having with wonderful compoſure finiſhed what remained of his bottle, and ate a few more biſcuits, he walked ſoftly out of the room, told the ſervant that his

maſter

maſter had moſt providentially fallen into repoſe, and deſired that he ſhould on no account be diſturbed till he awaked of himſelf.

Father Mulo, not chuſing to be troubled with inquiries into particulars, ſent a general meſſage to Madame de Seidlits, importing that Signor Zeluco was a great deal better. This afforded much pleaſure to both the mother and daughter; and the ſame evening, when Father Pedro called on purpoſe to ſtrengthen the impreſſion he had already made, they congratulated him on the comfortable accounts they had received of Zeluco. As Father Pedro had not ſeen nor heard of him ſince he had been laſt with the ladies, he was a good deal ſurpriſed at the intelligence; he could ſee no motive Zeluco could have for deviating from the plan that had been ſettled between them, and therefore declared his diſbelief of the account which the ladies had received. "Have you ſeen Signor Zeluco ſince you were here?" ſaid Ma-

dame de Seidlits. Father Pedro owned that he had not.—"Then our accounts are later than yours, and may be depended on; they come from Father Mulo, who was with Signor Zeluco, and ſent me the meſſage after he left him."

"There is ſome miſtake," ſaid Pedro angrily; "he cannot poſſibly be better."

"One would imagine, however," ſaid Laura, "that there is nothing to put you out of humour in the intelligence we have received, and which it is certainly poſſible *may* be true."

"The reaſon that I have to fear that it is not," reſumed Father Pedro, recollecting himſelf, "makes me averſe to your adopting an opinion which will give double uneaſineſs when found to be falſe."

"Whether it is falſe or true may be ſoon aſcertained," ſaid Madame de Seidlits, who immediately ſent a footman to inquire. The meſſenger returned in a few minutes, and informed them, that Signor Zeluco had been aſleep for ſeveral hours; and that he

he ſlept ſo calmly, there was every reaſon to hope he would be greatly better when he awoke.

"Heaven be praiſed!" exclaimed the Father; "ſome powerful ſoporific muſt have been adminiſtered to produce ſuch a laſting effect."

Zeluco was at length awoke by Father Pedro himſelf, who was greatly irritated at what had happened, and burned with impatience to vent his ill-humour.

"You ſeized a very ſeaſonable moment truly for ſlumbering," ſaid he, after a long altercation.

"I ſeized it not," replied Zeluco; "I am hoarſe with telling you, that, in ſpite of all I could do, it ſeized me."

"After I had melted them with the accounts of your ſufferings, aſſuring them you had not ſlept for three nights, when I returned with the ſtrongeſt hopes of improving on this favourable diſpoſition of Laura's mind," continued Pedro, "it was too provoking to find them informed that

you were in perfect eaſe, ſound aſleep, and the effect of all my labour annihilated."

"If the whole world had been to be annihilated, I could not help it," cried Zeluco; "your brother Mulo has power to lull Prometheus aſleep, in ſpite of all the efforts of his vulture. I'll tell you, Father," added Zeluco, with vehemence, as if he intended a ſtronger illuſtration, "*your* own eloquence is ſcarcely more powerful to rouſe and animate, than *his* drowſy monodies are to benumb the ſenſes."

This laſt ſtroke ſoftened the wrath, and ſmoothed the brow of Father Pedro. "Well, well, my friend," ſaid he, with a ſmile, "repining at what is paſt can do no good; all may yet be repaired; that this long and unexpected repoſe has been of ſervice to your health muſt not be denied to the ladies, but remember that you are to recover very ſlowly, and that you may poſſibly relapſe."

After a conſultation of ſome length, they ſeparated as good friends as ever.

CHAP. L.

Il eſt auſſi facile de ſe tromper ſoi-même ſans s'en appercevoir, qu'il eſt difficile de tromper les autres ſans qu'ils s'en apperçoivent. ROCHEFOUCAULT.

ABOUT this time, Madame de Seidlits received accounts of the failure of a houſe at Frankfort, in which her huſband had placed moſt part of the money he had left for the uſe of his widow and daughter. In the ſame houſe alſo was the reſidue of the money produced by the ſale of her furniture and other effects, when ſhe left Germany; part of which had ſerved to defray the expence of her journey, the reſt ſhe had ordered to be remitted to her banker at Naples, and expected every day to hear that this was done, when the ſad news of the failure arrived.

This news was accompanied, as is uſual on ſuch occaſions, with the comfortable aſ-

ſertion that it was only a temporary ſtoppage of payment; for that the houſe would pay all it owed in time. However that might be, Madame de Seidlits felt very great immediate inconveniency from the accident; ſhe had already contracted debts at Naples, for the diſcharge of which her ſole reliance was upon this money: ſhe concealed this misfortune from Laura, to ſave her the ſhock of ſuch calamitous news, and in hopes that ſhe might in a few poſts have the firſt ſtatement confirmed that there would finally be no loſs by the bankruptcy. In this diſtreſſing ſituation ſhe lamented the abſence of Signora Sporza, who was the only perſon to whom ſhe could freely ſpeak on ſuch a ſubject; and ſhe once thought of writing to her for a ſmall ſupply of money for her immediate occaſions; but fearing that this might not be convenient, or perhaps not agreeable, and having naturally a great reluctance to lie under a pecuniary obligation, ſhe determined rather to part with her jewels,

even

even thoſe which ſhe had received from her huſband, and on that account valued far above their intrinſic worth; ſhe accordingly applied to a jeweller, and ſold them for a ſum ſufficient for the diſcharge of her moſt urgent debts.

Father Pedro having ſeen the jeweller, with whom he was acquainted, coming out of Madame de Seidlits's houſe, entered into converſation with him, and endeavoured, from a prying diſpoſition not uncommon to monks, to ſift from him what his buſineſs with her was; for he well knew that Madame de Seidlits was not in circumſtances to purchaſe jewels. The jeweller, in conſequence of her injunctions, evaded his queſtions, which more and more excited the curioſity of Father Pedro, who did not reſt till he learned from one of the jeweller's workmen, what his maſter's buſineſs with Madame de Seidlits was.

This gave the Father an idea of the diſtreſs of her circumſtances far beyond what he had hitherto entertained, and inſpired him at the ſame time with freſh

hopes of ſucceſs in the ſcheme he was ſo ſanguinely engaged in. He immediately communicated the intelligence to Zeluco, adding, That he imagined it would be no longer neceſſary for him to exaggerate the uneaſineſs of his wound, but rather to admit the idea which the ladies had already received of its being better; although his general health was ſtill delicate, this plan would allow him the benefit of enjoying the freſh air, the pleaſure ſometimes of ſeeing and paying his court to Laura, while the perplexed ſtate in which the mother's circumſtances ſeemed to be, with the admonitions which the Father undertook on every proper occaſion to give both to the mother and daughter, might at length diſpoſe them to liſten to his propoſal.

Zeluco waited on Madame de Seidlits and Laura the following day; they both manifeſted ſincere ſatisfaction at ſeeing him. Madame de Seidlits cautioned him, with all the ſolicitude of friendſhip, to be very

very careful of himſelf till his health ſhould be fully reſtored; and Laura, impreſſed with a ſenſe of obligation, and ſoftened by the danger in which he had been, behaved with more cordiality than ſhe had ever ſhewn to him before. He continued to viſit them very frequently, and was always received in the ſame manner.

Father Pedro congratulated him on the very friendly reception which he met with, from which he augured an agreeable anſwer when he ſhould next ſpeak to Madame de Seidlits on the ſubject of Zeluco's ſuit, which he hinted he intended to do very ſoon; but the ſame circumſtances which had imparted this confidence to the mind of the Father, revived Zeluco's original hopes of obtaining Laura without marriage. He imagined that the proud ſpirit of both mother and daughter, humbled by misfortune and terrified by the horrors of impending poverty, would in a ſhort time acquieſce in the ſettlements he determined to make, unclogged with the ceremony he deteſted.

He

He wiſhed not, therefore, that the Father, by a precipitate renewal of the propoſal of marriage, ſhould render it more difficult for him to ſucceed upon his own terms, as he expected, though perhaps at a more diſtant period.

The wound in his arm was now on the point of healing; but the fears he had undergone, the medicines he had taken, the regimen he had followed, had weakened him conſiderably, giving him alſo an appearance of ſickneſs, which correſponded with the accounts that had been ſpread of his danger, and enabled him to ſupport a delay in the gratification of his deſires, with a degree of patience which he could not have diſplayed had he been in perfect health.

He begged of Father Pedro, therefore, not to urge his former ſuit at preſent, expreſſing an apprehenſion of diſguſting the ladies by too much importunity; then talked of his ſorrow at the thoughts of the diſtreſs they were in, wiſhed that the Father would prevail on Madame de Seidlits

to

to accept of a ſum of money, with which he directly preſented him, on the pretence of its coming from a perſon who ſuſpected her ſituation, but was unknown to Father Pedro and to herſelf, and was determined to conceal the tranſaction from all the world.

Although Zeluco behaved on this occaſion with a good deal of addreſs, ſpoke with great gentleneſs and in plauſible terms, Father Pedro's penetration pervaded his hypocriſy, and he at once ſaw his motive and drift.

Father Pedro, it muſt be confeſſed, was not a monk of that rigid ſelf-denial and ſublime piety that will intitle him, an hundred years after his death, to canonization.

Had Laura been inclined to meet Zeluco on his own terms, very poſſibly he would have winked at the connexion, or given her abſolution on eaſy terms; but his mind revolted at the thought of being acceſſary to betraying her: beſides, the virtues of Madame de Seidlits and her daughter com-

manded his entire eſteem; whereas the money he had from time to time received from Zeluco had not produced a ſingle ſentiment in his favour. He wiſhed well to both the former, and would have cheerfully ſerved them in any thing not attended with great inconveniency to himſelf; but he would not have abſtained from a pinch of ſnuff when his noſe required it, to have ſaved the other from the gallows.—For theſe reaſons Father Pedro refuſed the money; ſaying, He was ſufficiently acquainted with Madame de Seidlits, to know that ſuch an offer would offend her; that as for his own part he had been induced to interfere in this buſineſs, with the ſole view of rendering him the moſt eſſential ſervice that, in his opinion, one man could do to another, by aſſiſting him in his avowed inclination of marrying one of the moſt accompliſhed, beautiful, and virtuous women in Europe: "But," continued he, "Signor, if you have altered your mind, my interference of courſe muſt end here."

To

To this Zeluco replied, That he was ſenſible of what he owed to the Father; that he would ever take the warmeſt intereſt in both the ladies; but wiſhed not to have his former propoſal preſſed on them at that particular time.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

00097304

Digitized with financial assistance from
Government of Maharashtra
on 30 January, 2020